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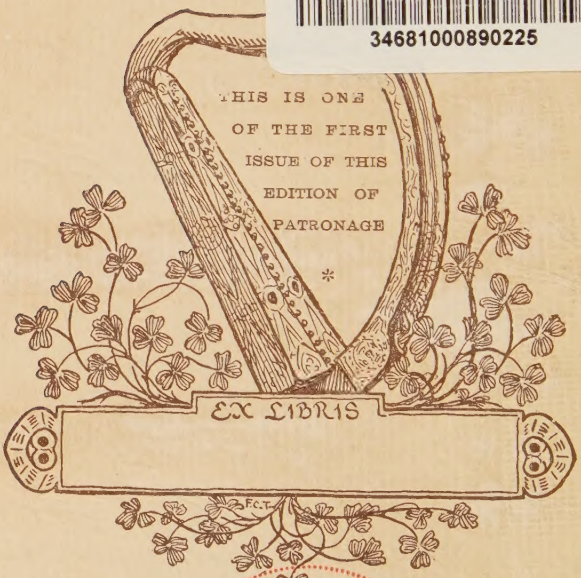

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PATRONAGE

PATRONAGE

BY

MARIA EDGEWORTH

VOLUME ONE

1924
LONDON
WILLIAM GLAISHER LTD.

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PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

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NOTE.

PATRONAGE is the longest of Miss Edgeworth's novels, and one that took her the longest in its composition. Founded on a story told by her father many years before she started in earnest to write it, it was still in hand in 1811, and then did not satisfy her; and it was not till 1813 that it was sent to press. It has been published in the following editions:—

PATRONAGE, 4 vols., London, 1814.
—— second edition, 4 vols., London, 1814.
—— third edition, 4 vols., London, 1815.
—— another edition (forming Vols. XI. and XII. of *Tales and Miscellaneous Pieces* by Maria Edgeworth), London, 1825.
—— another edition (forming Vols. XIV., XV., and [with *Comic Dramas*] XVI. of *Novels and Tales* of Maria Edgeworth), London, 1832-33.

Many reprints from the stereotype plates of this edition have been issued in various forms, and with varying arrangement of the stories.

Translated into French, *Les Protecteurs et les Protégés*, 5 vols., Paris, 1816.

F. J. S.

TO THE READER.

MY daughter again applies to me for my paternal *imprimatur*; and I hope that I am not swayed by partiality, when I give the sanction which she requires.

To excite the rising generation to depend upon their own exertions for success in life is surely a laudable endeavour; but, while the young mind is cautioned against dependence on the patronage of the great, and of office, it is encouraged to rely upon such friends as may be acquired by personal merit, good manners, and good conduct.

RICHARD LOVELL EDGEWORTH.

EDGEWORTH'S TOWN,
Oct. 6, 1813.

PREFACE

TO

THE THIRD EDITION.

THE public has called for a third *impression* of this book; it was, therefore, the duty of the author to take advantage of the corrections which have been communicated to her by private friends and public censors. Whatever she has thought liable to just censure has in the present edition been amended, as far as is consistent with the identity of the story. It is remarkable that several incidents which have been objected to as impossible or improbable were true. For instance, the medical case, in Chapter xix.

A bishop was really saved from suffocation by a clergyman in his diocese (no matter where or when), in the manner represented in Chapter x. The bishop died long ago; and he never was an epicure. A considerable estate was about seventy years ago regained, as described in Chapter xlii., by the discovery of a sixpence under the seal of a deed, which had been

coined later than the date of the deed. Whether it be advantageous or prudent to introduce such singular facts in a fictitious history is a separate consideration, which might lead to a discussion too long for the present occasion.

On some other points of more importance to the writer, it is necessary here to add a few words. It has been supposed that some parts of PATRONAGE were not written by Miss Edgeworth. This is not fact: the whole of these volumes were written by her, the opinions they contain are her own, and she is answerable for all the faults which may be found in them. Of ignorance of law, and medicine, and of diplomacy, she pleads guilty; and of making any vain or absurd pretensions to legal or medical learning, she hopes, by candid judges, to be acquitted. If in the letters and history of her lawyer and physician she has sometimes introduced technical phrases, it was done merely to give, as far as she could, the colour of reality to her fictitious personages. To fulfil the main purpose of her story it was essential only to show how some lawyers and physicians may be pushed forward for a time, without much knowledge either of law or medicine; or how, on the contrary, others may, independently of patronage, advance themselves permanently by their own merit. If this principal object of the fiction be accomplished, the author's ignorance on professional subjects is of little consequence to the moral or interest of the tale.

As to the charge of having drawn satirical portraits, she has already disclaimed all personality, and all intention of satirizing any profession; and she is grieved

to find it necessary to repel such a charge. The author of a slight work of fiction may, however, be consoled for any unjust imputation of personal satire, by reflecting, that even the grave and impartial historian cannot always escape similar suspicion. Tacitus says that "there must always be men, who, from congenial manners, and sympathy in vice, will think the fidelity of history a satire on themselves; and even the praise due to virtue is sure to give umbrage."

August 1, 1815.

PATRONAGE.

Chapter i.

"HOW the wind is rising!" said Rosamond.—"God help the poor people at sea to-night!"

Her brother Godfrey smiled.—"One would think," said he, "that she had an argosy of lovers at sea, uninsured."

"You gentlemen," replied Rosamond, "imagine that ladies are always thinking of lovers."

"Not *always*," said Godfrey; "only when they show themselves particularly disposed to humanity."

"My humanity, on the present occasion, cannot even be suspected," said Rosamond; "for you know, alas! that I have no lover at sea or land."

"But a shipwreck might bless the lucky shore with some rich waif," said Godfrey.

"Waifs and strays belong to the lady of the manor," said Rosamond; "and I have no claim to them."

"My mother would, I dare say, make over her right to you," said Godfrey.

"But that would do me no good," said Rosamond; "for here is Caroline, with superior claims of every

sort, and with that most undisputed of all the rights of woman—beauty."

"True: but Caroline would never accept of stray hearts," said Godfrey. "See how her lip curls with pride at the bare imagination!"

"Pride never curled Caroline's lip," cried Rosamond: "besides, pride is very becoming to a woman. No woman can be good for much without it, can she, mother?"

"Before you fly off, Rosamond, to my mother as to an ally, whom you are sure I cannot resist," said Godfrey, "settle first whether you mean to defend Caroline upon the ground of her having or not having pride."

A fresh gust of wind rose at this moment, and Rosamond listened to it anxiously.

"Seriously, Godfrey," said she, "do you remember the shipwrecks last winter?"

As she spoke, Rosamond went to one of the windows, and opened the shutter. Her sister Caroline followed, and they looked out in silence.

"I see a light to the left of the beacon," said Caroline.—"I never saw a light there before—What can it mean?"

"Only some fishermen," said Godfrey.

"But, brother, it is quite a storm," persisted Rosamond.

"Only equinoctial gales, my dear."

"Only equinoctial gales! But to drowning people it would be no comfort that they were shipwrecked only by equinoctial gales. There! there! what do you think of that blast?" cried Rosamond; "is not there some danger now?"

"Godfrey will not allow it," said Mrs Percy: "he is a soldier, and it is his trade not to know fear."

"Show him a *certain* danger," cried Mr Percy, looking up from a letter he was writing — "show him a *certain* danger, and he will feel fear as much as the greatest coward of you all.——Ha! upon my word, it is an *ugly* night," continued he, going to the window.

"Oh, my dear father!" cried Rosamond, "did you see that light—out at sea?—There! there!—to the left."

"To the east—I see it."

"Hark! did you hear?"

"Minute guns!" said Caroline.

There was a dead silence instantly. Everybody listened.—Guns were heard again.—The signal of some vessel in distress. The sound seemed near the shore.—Mr Percy and Godfrey hastened immediately to the coast.—Their servants and some people from the neighbouring village, whom they summoned, quickly followed. They found that a vessel had struck upon a rock, and from the redoubled signals, it appeared that the danger must be imminent.

The boatmen, who were just wakened, were surly, and swore that they would not stir; that whoever she was, she might weather out the night, for that, till daybreak, they couldn't get alongside of her. Godfrey instantly jumped into a boat, declaring he would go out directly at all hazards.—Mr Percy, with as much intrepidity, but, as became his age, with more prudence, provided whatever assistance was necessary from the villagers, who declared they would go anywhere with him; the boatmen, then ashamed, or afraid of losing the offered reward, pushed aside the *land lubbers*, and were ready to put out to sea.

Out they rowed—and they were soon so near the vessel, that they could hear the cries and voices of

the crew. The boats hailed her, and she answered that she was Dutch, homeward bound—had mistaken the lights upon the coast—had struck on a rock—was filling with water—and must go down in half-an-hour.

The moment the boats came alongside of her, the crew crowded into them so fast, and with such disorder and precipitation, that they were in great danger of being overset, which Mr Percy seeing, called out in a loud and commanding voice to stop several who were in the act of coming down the ship's side, and promised to return for them if they would wait. But just as he gave the order for his boatmen to *push off*, a French voice called out "Monsieur!—Monsieur l'Anglois!—one moment."

Mr Percy looked back and saw, as the moon shone full upon the wreck, a figure standing at the poop, leaning over with outstretched arms.

"I am Monsieur de Tourville, monsieur—a chargé d'affaires—with papers of the greatest importance—despatches."

"I will return for you, sir—it is impossible for me to take you now—our boat is loaded as much as it can bear," cried Mr Percy; and he repeated his order to the boatmen to *push off*.

Whilst Godfrey and Mr Percy were trimming the boat, M. de Tourville made an effort to jump into it.

"Oh! don't do it, sir!" cried a woman with a child in her arms; "the gentleman will come back for us: for God's sake, don't jump into it!"

"Don't attempt it, sir," cried Mr Percy, looking up, "or you'll sink us all."

M. de Tourville threw down the poor woman who tried to stop him, and he leaped from the side of the ship. At the same moment Mr Percy, seizing an oar, pushed the boat off, and saved it from being over-

set, as it must have been if M. de Tourville had scrambled into it. He fell into the water. Mr Percy, without waiting to see the event, went off as fast as possible, justly considering that the lives of the number he had under his protection, including his son's and his own, were not to be sacrificed for one man, whatever his name or office might be, especially when that man had persisted against all warning in his rash selfishness.

At imminent danger to themselves, Mr Percy and Godfrey, after landing those in the boat, returned once more to the wreck; and though they both declared that their consciences would be at ease even if they found that M. de Tourville was drowned, yet it was evident that they rejoiced to see him safe on board. This time the boat held him, and all the rest of his fellow-sufferers; and Mr Percy and his son had the satisfaction of bringing every soul safely to shore.—M. de Tourville, as soon as he found himself on terra-firma, joined with all around him in warm thanks to Mr Percy and his son, by whom their lives had been saved.—Godfrey undertook to find lodgings for some of the passengers and for the ship's crew in the village, and Mr Percy invited the captain, M. de Tourville, and the rest of the passengers, to Percy Hall, where Mrs Percy and her daughters had prepared everything for their hospitable reception. When they had warmed, dried, and refreshed themselves, they were left to enjoy what they wanted most —repose. The Percy family, nearly as much fatigued as their guests, were also glad to rest—all but Rosamond, who was wide awake, and so much excited by what had happened, that she continued talking to her sister, who slept in the same room with her, of every circumstance, and telling her imaginations of all that might come to pass from the adventures of the night,

whilst Caroline, too sleepy to be able to answer judiciously, or even plausibly, said, "Yes," "No," and "Very true," in the wrong place; and at length, incapable of uttering even a monosyllable, was reduced to inarticulate sounds in sign of attention. These grew fainter and fainter, and after long intervals absolutely failing, Rosamond with some surprise and indignation exclaimed, "I do believe, Caroline, you are asleep!" And in despair, Rosamond, for want of an auditor, was compelled to compose herself to rest.

In the course of a few hours the storm abated, and in the morning, when the family and their shipwrecked guests assembled at breakfast, all was calm and serene. Much to Rosamond's dissatisfaction, M. de Tourville did not make his appearance. Of the other strangers she had seen only a glimpse the preceding night, and had not settled her curiosity concerning what sort of beings they were. On a clear view by daylight of the personages who now sat at the breakfast-table, there did not appear much to interest her romantic imagination, or to excite her benevolent sympathy. They had the appearance of careful money-making men, thick, square-built Dutch merchants, who said little and eat much—butter especially. With one accord, as soon as they had breakfasted, they rose and begged permission to go down to the wreck to look after their property. Mr Percy and Godfrey offered immediately to accompany them to the coast.

Mr Percy had taken the precaution to set guards to watch all night, from the time he left the vessel, that no depredations might be committed. They found that some of the cargo had been damaged by the sea-water, but excepting this loss there was no other of any consequence; the best part of the goods was perfectly safe. As it was found that it would

take some time to repair the wreck, the Prussian and Hamburgh passengers determined to go on board a vessel which was to sail from a neighbouring port with the first fair wind. They came, previously to their departure, to thank the Percy family, and to assure them that their hospitality would never be forgotten.—Mr Percy pressed them to stay at Percy Hall till the vessel should sail, and till the captain should send notice of the first change of wind.—This offer, however, was declined, and the Dutch merchants, with due acknowledgments, said, by their speaking partner, that "they considered it safest and best to go with the goods, and so wished Mr Percy a good morning, and that he might prosper in all his dealings; and, sir," concluded he, "in any of the changes of fortune, which happen to men by land as well as by sea, please to remember the names of Grinderweld, Groensvelt, and Slidderchild of Amsterdam, or our correspondents, Panton and Co., London."

So having said, they walked away, keeping an eye upon the goods.

When Mr Percy returned home it was near dinner-time, yet M. de Tourville had not made his appearance. He was all this while indulging in a comfortable sleep. He had no goods on board the wreck except his clothes, and as these were in certain trunks and portmanteaus, in which Comtois, his valet, had a joint concern, M. de Tourville securely trusted that they would be obtained without his taking any trouble.

Comtois and the trunks again appeared, and a few minutes before dinner M. de Tourville made his entrance into the drawing-room, no longer in the plight of a shipwrecked mariner, but in gallant trim, wafting gales of momentary bliss as he went round the room paying his compliments to the ladies, bowing, smiling, apologizing—the very pink of courtesy!—The gentle-

men of the family, who had seen him the preceding night in his frightened, angry, drenched, and miserable state, could scarcely believe him to be the same person.

A Frenchman, it will be allowed, can contrive to say more, and to tell more of his private history in a given time, than could be accomplished by a person of any other nation. In the few minutes before dinner he found means to inform the company, that he was private secretary and favourite of the minister of a certain German court. To account for his having taken his passage in a Dutch merchant vessel, and for his appearing without a suitable suite, he whispered that he had been instructed to preserve a strict incognito, from which, indeed, nothing but the horrors of the preceding night could have drawn him.

Dinner was served, and at dinner M. de Tourville was seen, according to the polished forms of society, humbling himself in all the hypocrisy of politeness; with ascetic good-breeding, preferring every creature's ease and convenience to his own, practising a continual system of self-denial, such as almost implied a total annihilation of self-interest and self-love. All this was strikingly contrasted with the selfishness which he had recently betrayed, when he was in personal danger. Yet the influence of polite manners prevailed so far as to make his former conduct be forgotten by most of the family.

After dinner, when the ladies retired, in the female privy council held to discuss the merits of the absent gentlemen, Rosamond spoke first, and during the course of five minutes pronounced as many contradictory opinions of M. de Tourville, as could well be enunciated in the same space of time.—At last she paused, and her mother smiled.

"I understand your smile, mother," said Rosamond; "but the reason I appear a *little* to contradict myself

sometimes in my judgment of character is, because I speak my thoughts just as they rise in my mind, while persons who have a character for judgment to support always keep the changes of their opinion snug to themselves, never showing the items of the account on either side, and let you see nothing but their balance. —This is very grand, and if their balance be right, very glorious.—But ignominious as my mode of proceeding may seem, exposing me to the rebukes, derision, uplifted hands and eyes of my auditors, yet exactly because I am checked at every little mistake I make in my accounts, the chance is in my favour that my totals should at last be right, and my balance perfectly accurate."

"Very true, my dear: as long as you choose for your auditors only your friends, you are wise; but you sometimes lay your accounts open to strangers; and as they see only your errors, without ever coming to your conclusion, they form no favourable opinion of your accuracy."

"I don't mind what strangers think of me—much," said Rosamond.—"At least you will allow, mamma, that I have reason to be satisfied, if only those who do not know me could form an unfavourable opinion of my judgment—and, after all, ma'am, of the two classes of people, those who 'never said a foolish thing, and never did a wise one,' and those who never did a foolish thing, and never said a wise one, would not you rather that I should belong to the latter class?"

"Certainly, if I were reduced to the cruel alternative: but is there an unavoidable necessity for your belonging to either class?"

"I will consider it, ma'am," said Rosamond: "in the meantime, Caroline, you will allow that M. de Tourville is very agreeable?"

"Agreeable!" repeated Caroline; "such a selfish

being! Have you forgotten his attempt to jump into the boat, at the hazard of oversetting it, and of drowning my father and Godfrey, who went out to save him —and when my father warned him—and promised to return for him—selfish, cowardly creature!"

"Oh! poor man, he was so frightened, that he did not know what he was doing—he was not himself."

"You mean he was himself," said Caroline.

"You are very ungrateful, Caroline," cried Rosamond: "for I am sure M. de Tourville admires you extremely—yes, in spite of that provoking, incredulous smile, I say he does admire you exceedingly."

"And if he did," replied Caroline, "that would make no difference in my opinion of him."

"I doubt *that*," said Rosamond: "I know a person's admiring me would make a great difference in my opinion of his taste and judgment—and how much more if he had sense enough to admire you!"

Rosamond paused, and stood for some minutes silent in reverie.

"It will never do, my dear," said Mrs Percy, looking up at her; "trust me it will never do; turn him which way you will in your imagination, you will never make a hero of him—nor yet a brother-in-law."

"My dear mother, how could you guess what I was thinking of?" said Rosamond, colouring a little, and laughing: "but, I assure you—now let me explain to you, ma'am, in one word, what I think of M. de Tourville."

"Hush! my dear, he is here."

The gentlemen came into the room to tea.—M. de Tourville walked to the table at which Mrs Percy was sitting; and, after various compliments on the beauty of the views from the windows, on the richness of the foliage in the park, and the superiority of English

verdure, he next turned to look at the pictures in the saloon, distinguished a portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds, then passing to a table on which lay several books—"Is it permitted?" said he, taking up one of them—the Life of Lord Nelson.

M. de Tourville did not miss the opportunity of paying a just, and what to English ears he knew must be a delightful, tribute of praise to our naval hero. Then opening several other books, he made a rash attempt to pronounce in English their titles, and with the happy facility of a Frenchman, he touched upon various subjects, dwelt upon none, but found means on all to say something to raise himself and his country in the opinion of the company and at the same time to make all his auditors pleased with themselves. Presently, taking a seat between Rosamond and Caroline, he applied himself to draw out their talents for conversation. Nor did he labour in vain. They did not shut themselves up in stupid and provoking silence, nor did they make any ostentatious display of their knowledge or abilities.—M. de Tourville, as Rosamond had justly observed, seemed to be particularly struck with Miss Caroline Percy.—She was beautiful, and of an uncommon style of beauty. Ingenuous, unaffected, and with all the simplicity of youth, there was a certain dignity and graceful self-possession in her manner, which gave the idea of a superior character. She had, perhaps, less of what the French call *esprit* than M. de Tourville had been accustomed to meet with in young persons on the Continent, but he was the more surprised by the strength and justness of thought which appeared in her plain replies to the *finesse* of some of his questions.

The morning of the second day that he was at Percy Hall, M. de Tourville was admiring the Miss Percys' drawings, especially some miniatures of Caro-

line's, and he produced his snuff-box, to show Mr Percy a beautiful miniature on its lid.

It was exquisitely painted, M. de Tourville offered it to Caroline to copy, and Mrs Percy urged her to make the attempt.

"It is the celebrated Euphrosyne," said he, "who, from the stage, was very near mounting a throne."

M. de Tourville left the miniature in the hands of the ladies to be admired, and, addressing himself to Mr Percy, began to tell with much mystery the story of Euphrosyne. She was an actress of whom the prince, heir-apparent at the *German court* where he resided, had become violently enamoured. One of the prince's young confidants had assisted his royal highness in carrying on a secret correspondence with Euphrosyne, which she managed so artfully, that the prince was on the point of giving her a written promise of marriage, when the intrigue was discovered, and prevented from proceeding farther, by a certain Count Albert Altenberg, a young nobleman who had till that moment been one of the prince's favourites, but who by thus opposing his passion lost entirely his prince's favour. The story was a common story of an intrigue, such as happens every day in every country where there is a young prince; but there was something uncommon in the conduct of Count Altenberg. Mr Percy expressed his admiration of it; but M. de Tourville, though he acknowledged, as in morality bound, that the count's conduct had been admirable, just what it ought to be upon this occasion, yet spoke of him altogether as *une tête exaltée*, a young man of a romantic Quixotic enthusiasm, to which he had sacrificed the interests of his family, and his own hopes of advancement at court. In support of this opinion, M. de Tourville related several anecdotes, and on each of these anecdotes Mr Percy

and M. de Tourville differed in opinion. All that was produced to prove that the young count had no judgment or discretion appeared to Mr Percy proofs of his independence of character and greatness of soul. Mr Percy repeated the anecdotes to Mrs Percy and his daughters; and M. de Tourville, as soon as he saw that the ladies, and especially Caroline, differed from him, immediately endeavoured to slide round to their opinion, and assured Caroline, with many asseverations, and with his hand upon his heart, that he had merely been speaking of the light in which these things appeared to the generality of men of the world; that for his own particular feelings they were all in favour of the frankness and generosity of character evinced by these imprudences—he only lamented that certain qualities should expose their possessor to the censure and ridicule of those who were, like half the world, incapable of being moved by any motive but interest, and unable to reach to the idea of the moral sublime.

The more M. de Tourville said upon the subject, and the more gesture and emphasis he used to impress the belief in his truth, the less Caroline believed him, and the more dislike and contempt she felt for the duplicity and pitiful meanness of a character which was always endeavouring to seem, instead of to be.—He understood and felt the expression of her countenance, and mortified by that dignified silence, which said more than words could express, he turned away, and never afterwards addressed to her any of his *confidential* conversation.

From this moment Rosamond's opinion of M. de Tourville changed. She gave him up altogether, and denied, or at least gave him grudgingly, that praise, which he eminently deserved for agreeable manners and conversational talents. Not a foible of his now

escaped her quick observation and her lively perception of ridicule.

Whether from accident, or from some suspicion that he had lost ground with the ladies, M. de Tourville the next day directed the principal part of his conversation to the gentlemen of the family: comforting himself with the importance of his political and official character, he talked grandly of politics and diplomacy. Rosamond, who listened with an air of arch attention, from time to time, with a tone of ironical simplicity, asked explanations on certain points relative to the diplomatic code of morality, and professed herself much edified and enlightened by the answers she received.

She wished, as she told Caroline, that some one would write Advice to Diplomatists, in the manner of Swift's Advice to Servants; and she observed that M. de Tourville, chargé d'affaires, &c., might supply anecdotes illustrative, and might embellish the work with a portrait of a finished diplomatist. Unfortunately for the public, on the third morning of the diplomatist's visit, a circumstance occurred, which prevented the further development of his character, stopped his flow of anecdote, and snatched him from the company of his hospitable hosts. In looking over his papers, in order to show Mr Percy a complimentary letter from some crowned head, M. de Tourville discovered that an important packet of papers belonging to his despatches was missing. He had in the moment of danger and terror stuffed all his despatches into his greatcoat pocket, in getting out of the boat he had given his coat to Comtois to carry, and, strange to tell, this chargé d'affaires had taken it upon trust, from the assertion of his valet, that all his papers were safe. He once, indeed, had looked them over, but so carelessly that he never had

missed the packet. His dismay was great when he discovered his loss. He repeated at least a thousand times that he was an undone man, unless the packet could be found.—Search was made for it, in the boat, on the shore, in every probable and improbable place —but all in vain; and in the midst of the search a messenger came to announce that the wind was fair, that the ship would sail in one hour, and that the captain could wait for no man. M. de Tourville was obliged to take his departure without this precious packet.

Mrs Percy was the only person in the family who had the humanity to pity him. He was too little of a soldier for Godfrey's taste, too much of a courtier for Mr Percy, too frivolous for Caroline, and too little romantic for Rosamond.

"So," said Rosamond, "here was a fine beginning of a romance with a shipwreck, that ends only in five square merchants, who do not lose even a guilder of their property, and a diplomatist, with whom we are sure of nothing but that he has lost a bundle of papers for which nobody cares!"

In a few days the remembrance of the whole adventure began to fade from her fancy. M. de Tourville, and his snuff-box, and his essences, and his flattery, and his diplomacy, and his lost packet, and all the circumstances of the shipwreck, would have appeared as a dream, if they had not been maintained in the rank of realities by the daily sight of the wreck, and by the actual presence of the Dutch sailors, who were repairing the vessel.

Chapter ij.

A FEW days after the departure of M. de Tourville, commissioner Falconer, a friend, or at least a relation of Mr Percy's, came to pay him a visit. As the commissioner looked out of the window, and observed the Dutch carpenter, who was passing by with tools under his arm, he began to talk of the late shipwreck. Mr Falconer said he had heard much of the successful exertions and hospitality of the Percy family on that occasion—regretted that he had himself been called to town just at that time—asked many questions about the passengers on board the vessel, and when M. de Tourville was described to him, deplored that Mr Percy had never thought of trying to detain this foreigner a few days longer.

For, argued the commissioner, though M. de Tourville might not be an accredited chargé d'affaires, yet, since he was a person in some degree in an official capacity, and intrusted with secret negociations, Government might have wished to know something about him. "And at all events," added the commissioner, with a shrewd smile, "it would have been a fine way of paying our court to a certain great man."

"So, commissioner, you still put your trust in great men?" said Mr Percy.

"Not in all great men, but in some," replied the commissioner; "for instance, in your old friend, Lord Oldborough, who, I'm happy to inform you, is just come into our neighbourhood to Clermont Park, of which he has at last completed the purchase, and has sent down his plate and pictures.—Who knows but he may make Clermont Park his summer residence, instead of his place in Essex? and if he should, there's no saying of what advantage it might be, for I have it from

the very best authority, that his lordship's influence in *a certain quarter* is greater than ever. Of course, Mr Percy, you will wait upon Lord Oldborough, when he comes to this part of the country?"

"No, I believe not," said Mr Percy: "I have no connexion with him now."

"But you were so intimate with him abroad," expostulated Mr Falconer.

"It is five-and-twenty years since I knew him abroad," said Mr Percy; "and from all I have heard, he is an altered man. When I was intimate with Lord Oldborough, he was a generous, open-hearted youth: he has since become a politician, and I fear he has sold himself for a ribbon to the demon of ambition."

"No matter to whom he has sold himself, or for what," replied the commissioner; "that is his affair, not ours. We must not be too nice. He is well disposed towards you; and, my dear sir, I should take it as a very particular favour if you would introduce me to his lordship."

"With great pleasure," said Mr Percy, "the very first opportunity."

"We must make opportunities—not wait for them," said the commissioner, smiling. "Let me entreat that you will pay your respects to his lordship as soon as he comes into the country. It really is but civil—and take me in your hand."

"With all my heart," said Mr Percy; "but mine shall only be a visit of civility."

Well satisfied with having obtained this promise, commissioner Falconer departed.

Besides his general desire to be acquainted with the great, the commissioner had particular reasons for wishing to be introduced at this time to Lord Oldborough, and he had a peculiar cause for being curious about M. de Tourville.—Mr Falconer was in possession of the

packet which that diplomatist had lost. It had been found by one of the commissioner's sons, Mr John Falconer; or rather by Mr John Falconer's dog, Neptune, who brought it to his master when he was bathing in the sea the day after the shipwreck. It had been thrown by the tide among some sea-weed, where it was entangled, and where it lay hid till it was discovered by the dog. Mr John Falconer had carried it home, and boasting of his dog's sagacity, had produced it rather as a proof of the capital manner in which he had taught Neptune to fetch and carry, than from any idea or care for the value of the packet; John Falconer being one of those men who care for very little in this world,

"Whilst they have their dog and their gun."

Not so the commissioner, who immediately began to examine the papers with serious curiosity, to discover whether they could by any means be productive of advantage to him or his family. The sea-water had injured only the outer pages; but though the inner were not in the least damaged, it was difficult to make out their contents, for they were written in cipher. Commissioner Falconer, however, was skilled in the art of deciphering, and possessed all the ingenuity and patience necessary for the business. The title, superscription, and signature of the paper were obliterated, so that he could not guess from whom they came, or to whom they were addressed; he perceived that they were political; but of what degree of importance they might be he could not decide, till he heard of M. de Tourville the diplomatist, and of his distress at the loss of this packet. The commissioner then resolved to devote the evening, ensuing day, and night, if requisite, to the business, that he might have it in readiness to carry with him when he went to pay his

respects to Lord Oldborough. Foreseeing that something might be made of this intercepted despatch, and fearing that if he mentioned it to Mr Percy, that gentleman might object to opening the papers, Mr Falconer left Percy Hall without giving the most remote hint of the treasure which he possessed, or of the use that he intended to make of his discovery.

Early in the ensuing week Mr Percy went to pay his visit of civility, and Mr Falconer his visit of policy, to Lord Oldborough. His lordship was so much altered, that it was with difficulty Mr Percy recollected in him any traces of the same person. The Lord Oldborough he had formerly known was gay, gallant, and rather dissipated; of a frank, joyous air and manner. The Lord Oldborough whom he now saw was a serious, reserved-looking personage, with a face in which the lines of thought and care were deeply marked; large eyebrows, vigilant eyes, with an expression of ability and decision in his whole countenance, but not of tranquillity or of happiness. His manner was well-bred, but rather cold and formal: his conversation circumspect, calculated to draw forth the opinions, and profit by the information of others, rather than to assert or display his own. He seemed to converse, to think, to live, not with any enjoyment of the present, but with a view to some future object, about which he was constantly anxious.

Mr Percy and Mr Falconer both observed Lord Oldborough attentively during this visit: Mr Percy studied him with philosophical curiosity, to discover what changes had been made in his lordship's character by the operation of ambition, and to determine how far that passion had contributed to his happiness; Mr Falconer studied him with the interested eye of a man of the world, eager to discern what advantage could be made by ministering to that ambition, and to decide

whether there was about his lordship the making of a good patron.

There was, he thought, the right twist, if he had but skill to follow, and humour it in the working; but this was a task of much nicety. Lord Oldborough appeared to be aware of the commissioner's views, and was not disposed to burden himself with new *friends*. It seemed easy to go to a certain point with his lordship, but difficult to get farther; easy to obtain his attention, but impossible to gain his confidence.

The commissioner, however, had many resources ready; many small means of fastening himself both on his lordship's private and public interests. He determined to begin first with the despatch which he had been deciphering. With this view he led Mr Percy to speak of the shipwreck, and of M. de Tourville. Lord Oldborough's attention was immediately awakened; and when Mr Falconer perceived that the regret for not having seen M. de Tourville, and the curiosity to know the nature of his secret negociations had been sufficiently excited, the commissioner quitted the subject, as he could go no farther whilst restrained by Mr Percy's presence. He took the first opportunity of leaving the room with his lordship's nephew, Col. Hauton, to look at some horses, which were to run at the ensuing races.

Left alone with Mr Percy, Lord Oldborough looked less reserved, for he plainly saw, indeed Mr Percy plainly showed, that he had nothing to ask from the great man, but that he came only to see his friend.

"Many years since we met, Mr Percy," said his lordship, sitting down and placing his chair for the first time without considering whether his face or his back were to the light.—"A great many years since we met, Mr Percy; and yet I should not think so from your

appearance; you do not look as if—shall I say it?—five-and-twenty years had passed since that time. But you have been leading an easy life in the country—the happiest life: I envy you."

Mr Percy, thinking that these were words of course, the mere polite *cant* of a courtier to a country gentleman, smiled, and replied that few who were acquainted with their different situations in the world would imagine that Mr Percy could be an object of envy to Lord Oldborough, a statesman at the summit of favour and fortune.

"Not the summit," said Lord Oldborough, sighing; "and if I were even at the summit, it is, you know, a dangerous situation. Fortune's wheel never stands still—the highest point is therefore the most perilous." His lordship sighed again as deeply as before. —Then spoke, or rather led to the subject of general politics, of which Mr Percy gave his opinions with freedom and openness, yet without ever forgetting the respect due to Lord Oldborough's situation. His lordship seemed sensible of this attention, sometimes nodded, and sometimes smiled, as Mr Percy spoke of public men or measures; but when he expressed any sentiment of patriotism, or of public virtue, Lord Oldborough took to his snuff-box, shook and levelled the snuff; and if he listened, listened as to words superfluous and irrelevant. When Mr Percy uttered any principle favourable to the liberty of the press, or of the people, his lordship would take several pinches of snuff rapidly, to hide the expression of his countenance; if the topics were continued, his averted eyes and compressed lips showed disapprobation, and the difficulty he felt in refraining from reply. From reply, however, he did absolutely refrain; and after a pause of a few moments, with a smile, in a softer and lower voice than his usual tone,

he asked Mr Percy some questions about his family, and turned the conversation again to domestic affairs;—expressed surprise, that a man of Mr Percy's talents should live in such absolute retirement, and seeming to forget what he had said himself but half-an-hour before, of the pains and dangers of ambition, and all that Mr Percy had said of his love of domestic life, appeared to take it for granted that Mr Percy would be glad to shine in public, if opportunity were not wanting. Upon this supposition, his lordship dexterously pointed out ways by which he might distinguish himself; threw out assurances of his own good wishes, compliments to his talents; and, in short, sounded his heart, still expecting to find corruption or ambition at the bottom. But none was to be found. Lord Oldborough was convinced of it—and surprised. Perhaps his esteem for Mr Percy's understanding fell some degrees—he considered him as an eccentric person, acting from unaccountable motives; but still he respected him as that rarest of all things in a politician's eye—a really honest independent man. He believed also that Mr Percy had some regard for him; and whatever portion it might be, it was valuable and extraordinary—for it was disinterested: besides, they could never cross in their objects—and as Mr Percy lived out of the world, and had no connexion with any party, he was a perfectly safe man. All these thoughts acted so powerfully upon Lord Oldborough, that he threw aside his reserve, in a manner which would have astonished and delighted Mr Falconer. Mr Percy was astonished, but not delighted—he saw a noble mind corroded and debased by ambition—virtuous principle, generous feeling, stifled—a powerful, capacious understanding distorted—a soul, once expatiating and full of high thoughts, now confined to a span—bent down to low concerns—imprisoned in the precincts of a court.

"You pity me," said Lord Oldborough, who seemed to understand Mr Percy's thoughts; "you pity me—I pity myself. But such is ambition, and I cannot live without it—once and always its slave."

"A person of such a strong mind as Lord Oldborough could emancipate himself from any slavery—even that of habit."

"Yes, if he wished to break through it—but he does not."

"Can he have utterly——"

"Lost his taste for freedom? you would say. Yes—utterly. I see you pity me," said his lordship, with a bitter smile; "and," added he, rising proudly, "I am unused to be pitied, and I am awkward, I fear, under the obligation." Resuming his friendly aspect, however, in a moment or two, he followed Mr Percy, who had turned to examine a fine picture.

"Yes; a Corregio. You are not aware, my dear sir," continued he, "that between the youth you knew at Paris, and the man who has now the honour to speak to you, there is nothing in common—absolutely nothing—except regard for Mr Percy. You had always great knowledge of character, I remember; but with respect to my own, you will recollect, that I have the advantage of possessing *la carte du pays*. You are grown quite a philosopher, I find; and so am I, in my own way. In short, to put the question between us at rest for ever, *there is nothing left for me in life but ambition.* Now let us go to Corregio, or what you please."

Mr Percy followed his lordship's lead immediately to Italy, to France, to Paris, and talking over old times and youthful days, the conversation grew gay and familiar. Lord Oldborough seemed enlivened and pleased, and yet, as if it was a reminiscence of a former state of existence, he often repeated, "Ah! those were young days—very young: I was a boy

then—quite a boy." At last Mr Percy touched upon love and women, and, by accident, mentioned an Italian lady whom they had known abroad.—A flash of pale anger, almost of phrensy, passed across Lord Oldborough's countenance: he turned short, darted full on Mr Percy a penetrating, imperious, interrogative look.—Answered by the innocence, the steady openness of Mr Percy's countenance, Lord Oldborough grew red instantly, and, conscious of his unusual change of colour, stood actually abashed. A moment afterward, commanding his agitation, he forced his whole person to an air of tranquillity—took up the red-book, which lay upon his table—walked deliberately to a window, and, looking earnestly through his glass, asked if Mr Percy could recollect who was member for some borough in the neighbourhood? The conversation after this languished; and though some efforts were made, it never recovered the tone of ease and confidence. Both parties felt relieved from an indefinable sort of constraint by the return of the other gentlemen. Mr Falconer begged Mr Percy to go and look at a carriage of a new construction, which the colonel had just brought from town; and the colonel accompanying Mr Percy, the stage was thus left clear for the commissioner to open his business about M. de Tourville's packet. He did it with so much address, and with so little circumlocution, that Lord Oldborough immediately comprehended how important the papers might be to him, and how necessary it was to secure the decipherer. When Mr Percy returned, he found the commissioner and his lordship in earnest and seemingly confidential conversation. Both Mr Falconer and Mr Percy were now pressed to stay to dine and to sleep at Clermont Park; an invitation which Mr Percy declined, but which the commissioner accepted.

In the evening, when the company who had dined

at Clermont Park were settled to cards and music, Lord Oldborough, after walking up and down the room with the commissioner in silence for some minutes, retired with him into his study, rang, and gave orders that they should not be interrupted on any account till supper. The servant informed his lordship that such and such persons, whom he had appointed, were waiting.—"I cannot possibly see them till to-morrow," naming the hour. The servant laid on the table before his lordship a huge parcel of letters. Lord Oldborough, with an air of repressed impatience, bid the man send his secretary, Mr Drakelow — looked over the letters, wrote with a pencil, and with great despatch, a few words on the back of each—met Mr Drakelow as he entered the room—put the unfolded letters all together into his hands—"The answers on the back—to be made out in form—ready for signature at six to-morrow."

"Yes, my lord. May I ask——"

"Ask nothing, sir, if you please—I am busy—you have your directions."

Mr Drakelow bowed submissive, and made his exit with great celerity.

"Now to our business, my dear sir," said his lordship, seating himself at the table with Mr Falconer, who immediately produced M. de Tourville's papers.

It is not at this period of our story necessary to state precisely their contents; it is sufficient to say, that they opened to Lord Oldborough a scene of diplomatic treachery abroad, and of ungrateful duplicity at home. From some of the intercepted letters he discovered that certain of his colleagues, who appeared to be acting along with him with the utmost cordiality, were secretly combined against him; and were carrying on an underplot, to deprive him at

once of popularity, favour, place, and power. The strength, firmness, hardness of mind, which Lord Oldborough exhibited at the moment of this discovery, perfectly amazed Mr Falconer. His lordship gave no sign of astonishment, uttered no indignant exclamation, nor betrayed any symptoms of alarm; but he listened with motionless attention, when Mr Falconer from time to time interrupted his reading, and put himself to great expence of face and lungs to express his abhorrence of "such inconceivable treachery." Lord Oldborough maintained an absolute silence, and waiting till the commissioner had exhausted himself in invective, would point with his pencil to the line in the paper where he had left off, and calmly say—"Have the goodness to go on—Let us proceed, sir, if you please."

The commissioner went on till he came to the most important and interesting point, and then glancing his eye on his intended patron's profile, which was towards him, he suddenly stopped. Lord Oldborough, raising his head from the hand on which it leaned, turned his full front face upon Mr Falconer.

"Let me hear the whole, if you please, sir.—To form a judgment upon any business, it is necessary to have the whole before us.—You need not fear to shock my feelings, sir. I wish always to see men and things as they are." Mr Falconer still hesitating, and turning over the leaves—"As my friend in this business, Mr Falconer," continued his lordship, "you will comprehend that the essential point is to put me as soon as possible in possession of the facts—then I can decide, and act. If it will not fatigue you too much, I wish to go through these papers before I sleep."

"Fatigue? O my lord, I am not in the least—cannot be fatigued. But the fact is, I cannot go on;

for the next pages I have not yet deciphered—the cipher changes here."

Lord Oldborough looked much disappointed and provoked; but, after a few minutes' pause, calmly said, "What time will it take, sir, to decipher the remainder?"

The commissioner protested he did not know—could not form an idea—he and his son had spent many hours of intense labour on the first papers before he could make out the first cipher—now this was a new one, probably more difficult, and whether he could make it out at all, or in what time, he was utterly unable to say. Lord Oldborough replied, "Let us understand one another at once, commissioner Falconer, if you please. My maxim, and the maxim of every man in public life is, or ought to be—Serve me and I will serve you. I have no pretensions to Mr Falconer's friendship on any other grounds, I am sensible; nor on any other terms can he have a claim to whatever power of patronage I possess. But I neither serve nor will be served by halves: my first object is to make myself master, as soon as possible, of the contents of the papers in your hands; my next to secure your inviolable secrecy on the whole transaction."

The commissioner was going to make vows of secrecy and protestations of zeal, but Lord Oldborough cut all that short with "Of course—of course," pronounced in the driest accent, and went on with, "Now, sir, you know my object; will you do me the honour to state yours?—You will excuse my abruptness—time in some circumstances is everything—Do me and yourself the justice to say at once what return I can make for the service you have done or may do me and Government."

"My only hesitation in speaking, my lord, was——"

"Have no hesitation in speaking, I beseech you, sir."

I beseech, in tone, was in effect, *I command* you, sir;—and Mr Falconer, under the influence of an imperious and superior mind, came at once to that point, which he had not intended to come to for a month, or to approach till after infinite precaution and circumlocution.

"My object is to push my son Cunningham in the diplomatic line, my lord—and I wish to make him one of your secretaries."

The commissioner stopped short, astonished to find that the truth, and the whole truth, had absolutely passed his lips, and in such plain words; but they could not be recalled: he gasped for breath—and began an apologetical sentence about poor Mr Drakelow, whom he should be sorry to injure or displace.

"Never mind that now—time enough to think of Drakelow," said Lord Oldborough, walking up and down the room—then stopping short, "I must see your son, sir."

"I will bring him here to-morrow, if your lordship pleases."

"As soon as possible! But he can come surely without your going for him—write, and beg that we may see him at breakfast—at nine, if you please."

The letter was written, and despatched immediately. Lord Oldborough, whilst the commissioner was writing, noted down the heads of what he had learned from M. de Tourville's packet: then locked up those of the papers which had been deciphered, put the others into Mr Falconer's charge, and recommended it to him to use all possible despatch in deciphering the remainder.—The commissioner declared he would sit up all night at the task; this did not appear to be more than was expected.—His lordship

rung, and ordered candles in Mr Falconer's room, then returned to the company in the saloon, without saying another word. None could guess by his countenance or deportment that any unusual circumstance had happened, or that his mind was in the least perturbed. Mrs Drakelow thought he was wholly absorbed in a rubber of whist, and Miss Drakelow at the same time was persuaded that he was listening to her music.

Punctual to the appointed hour—for ambition is as punctual to appointments as love—Mr Cunningham Falconer made his appearance at nine, and was presented by his father to Lord Oldborough, who received him, not with any show of gracious kindness, but as one who had been forced upon him by circumstances, and whom, for valuable considerations, he had bargained to take into his service. To try the young diplomatist's talents, Lord Oldborough led him first to speak on the subject of the Tourville papers, then urged him on to the affairs of Germany, and the general interests and policy of the different courts of Europe. Trembling, and in agony for his son, the commissioner stood aware of the danger of the youth's venturing out of his depth, aware also of the danger of showing that he dared not venture, and incapable of deciding between these equal fears: but soon he was reassured by the calmness of his son. Cunningham, who had not so much information or capacity, but who had less sensibility than his father, often succeeded where his father's timidity prognosticated failure. Indeed, on the present occasion, the care which the young diplomatist took not to commit himself, the dexterity with which he "helped himself by countenance and gesture," and "was judicious by signs," proved that he was well skilled in all those arts of *seeming wise*, which have been so well noted

for use by "the greatest, wisest, meanest of mankind." Young though he was, Cunningham was quite sufficiently slow, circumspect, and solemn, to deserve to be ranked among those whom Bacon calls *Formalists*, "who do nothing, or little, very solemnly — who seem always to keep back somewhat; and when they know within themselves they speak of what they do not know, would, nevertheless, seem to others to know that of which they may not well speak."

Lord Oldborough listened to whatever he said, and marked all that he did not say with an air of attentive composure, which, as Mr Falconer thought, augured well for his son; but now and then there was, for scarcely a definable portion of time, an expression of humour in his lordship's eye, a sarcastic smile, which escaped the commissioner's observation, and which, even if he had observed, he could not, with his limited knowledge of Lord Oldborough's character, have rightly interpreted. If his lordship had expressed his thoughts, perhaps, they might have been, though in words less quaint, nearly the same as those of the philosophic statesman, who says, "It is a ridiculous thing, and fit for a satire to persons of judgment, to see what shifts these *formalists* have, and what prospectives to make superficies to seem body that hath depth and bulk."

But Lord Oldborough philosophising, and Lord Oldborough acting, were two different people. His perception of the ridicule of the young secretary's solemnity, and of the insufficiency of his information and capacity, made no alteration in the minister's determination. The question was not whether the individual was fit for this place or that employment, but whether it was expedient he should have it for the security of political power. Waiving all delicacy, Lord Oldborough now, as in most other cases, made it

his chief object to be understood and obeyed; therefore he applied directly to the universal motive, and spoke the universal language of interest.

"Mr Falconer," said he, "if you put me in possession of the remainder of M. de Tourville's papers this night, I will to-morrow morning put this young gentleman into the hands of my present secretary, Mr Drakelow, who will prepare him for the situation you desire. Mr Drakelow himself will, probably, soon leave me, to be employed more advantageously for his Majesty's service, in some other manner."

The decipherers, father and son, shut themselves up directly, and set to work with all imaginable zeal. The whole packet was nearly expounded before night, and the next morning Lord Oldborough performed his part of the agreement. He sent for Mr Drakelow, and said, "Mr Drakelow, I beg that, upon your return to town, you will be so good as to take this young gentleman, Mr Cunningham Falconer, to your office. Endeavour to prepare him to supply your place with me whenever it may be proper for his Majesty's service, and for your interest, to send you to Constantinople, or elsewhere."

Mr Drakelow, though infinitely surprised and displeased, bowed all submission. Nothing else he knew was to be done with Lord Oldborough. His lordship, as soon as his secretary had left the room, turned to Cunningham, and said, "You will not mention anything concerning M. de Tourville's intercepted papers to Mr Drakelow, or to any other person. Affairs call me to town immediately: to-morrow morning at six, I set off. You will, if you please, sir, be ready to accompany me. I will not detain you longer from any preparations you may have to make for your journey."

No sooner had the father and son quitted Lord

Oldborough's presence than Mr Falconer exclaimed with exultation, "I long to see our good cousin Percy, that I may tell him how I have provided already for one of my sons."

"But remember, sir," said Cunningham, "that Mr Percy is to know nothing of the Tourville packet."

"To be sure not," said Mr Falconer; "he is to know nothing of the means, he is to see only the end —the successful end. Ha! cousin Percy, I think we know rather better than you do how to make something of everything—even of a shipwreck."

"To prevent his having any suspicions," continued Cunningham, "it will be best to give Mr Percy some probable reason for Lord Oldborough's *taking to us* so suddenly. It will be well to hint that you have opportunities of obliging about the borough, or about the address at the county meeting, or——"

"No, no; no particulars: never go to particulars," said old Falconer: "stick to generals, and you are safe. Say, in general, that I had an opportunity of obliging Government. Percy is not curious, especially about *jobbing*. He will ask no questions; or, if he should, I can easily put him upon a wrong scent. Now, Cunningham, listen to me: I have done my best, and have pushed you into a fine situation: but remember, you cannot get on in the diplomatic line without a certain degree of diplomatic information. I have pointed this out to you often; you have neglected to make yourself master of these things, and, for want of them in office, you will come, I fear, some day or other to shame."

"Do not be afraid of that—no danger of my coming to shame any more than a thousand other people in office, who never trouble themselves about diplomatic information, and all that. There is always some clerk

who knows the forms, and with those, and looking for what one wants upon the spur of the occasion in books and pamphlets, and so forth, one may go on very well —if one does but know how to keep one's own counsel. You see I got through with Lord Oldborough to-day——"

"Ay—but I assure you I trembled for you, and I could have squeezed myself into an auger-hole once, when you blundered about that treaty of which I knew that you knew nothing."

"O sir, I assure you I had turned over the leaves. I was correct enough as to the dates; and, suppose I blundered, as my brother Buckhurst says, half the world never know what they are saying, and the other half never find it out. — Why, sir, you were telling me the other night such a blunder of Prince Potemkin's——"

"Very true," interrupted the commissioner; "but you are not Prince Potemkin, nor yet a prime minister; if you were, no matter how little you knew—you might get other people to supply your deficiencies. But now, in your place, and in the course of making your way upwards, you will be called upon to supply *others* with the information they may want. And you know I shall not be always at your elbow; therefore I really am afraid——"

"Dear sir, fear nothing," said Cunningham: "I shall do as well as others do—the greatest difficulty is over. I have taken the first step, and it has cost nothing."

"Well, get on, my boy—honestly, if you can—but get on."

Chapter iij.

WITH the true genius of a political castle-builder, Mr Falconer began to add story after story to the edifice, of which he had thus promptly and successfully laid the foundation. Having by a lucky hit provided for one of his sons, that is to say, put him in a fair way of being provided for, the industrious father began to form plans for the advancement of his two other sons, Buckhurst and John: Buckhurst was destined by his father for the Church; John for the army. The commissioner, notwithstanding he had been closeted for some hours with Lord Oldborough, and notwithstanding his son Cunningham was to be one of his lordship's secretaries, was well aware that little or no progress had been made in Lord Oldborough's real favour or confidence. Mr Falconer knew that he had been literally *paid by the job*, that he was considered and treated accordingly; yet, upon the whole, he was well pleased that it should be so, for he foresaw the possibility of his doing for his lordship many more jobs, public and private. He lost no time in preparing for the continuity of his secret services, and in creating a political necessity for his being employed in future, in a manner that might ensure the advancement of the rest of his family. In the first place, he knew that Lord Oldborough was desirous, for the enlargement of the grounds at Clermont Park, to purchase certain adjoining lands, which, from some ancient pique, the owner was unwilling to sell. The proprietor was a tenant of Mr Falconer's: he undertook to negotiate the business, and to use his influence to bring his tenant to reason. This offer, made through Cunningham, was accepted by Lord Oldborough, and the negotiation led to fresh communications.—There

was soon to be a county meeting, and an address was to be procured in favour of certain measures of Government, which it was expected would be violently opposed. In the commissioner's letters to his son, the private secretary, he could say and suggest whatever he pleased; he pointed out the gentlemen of the county who ought to be conciliated, and he offered his services to represent things properly to some with whom he was intimate. The sheriff and the under-sheriff also should know, without being informed directly from ministry, what course in conducting the meeting would be agreeable in a certain quarter—who so proper to say and do all that might be expedient as Mr Falconer, who was on the spot, and well acquainted with the county?—The commissioner was informed by the private secretary, that his services would be acceptable. There happened also, at this time, to be some disputes and grievances in that part of the country about tax-gatherers. Mr Falconer hinted, that he could soften and accommodate matters, if he were empowered to do so—and he was so empowered. Besides all this, there there was a borough in that county, in which the interest of Government had been declining; attempts were made to *open the borough*—Mr Falconer could be of use in *keeping it close*—and he was commissioned to do everything in his power in this business. In a short time Mr Falconer was acting on all these points as an agent and partizan of Lord Oldborough's. But there was one thing which made him uneasy; he was acting here, as in many former instances, merely upon vague hopes of future reward.

Whilst his mind was full of these thoughts, a new prospect of advantage opened to him in another direction. Colonel Hauton, Lord Oldborough's nephew, stayed during his uncle's absence at Clermont Park, to be in readiness for the races, which, this year, were

expected to be uncommonly fine. Buckhurst Falconer had been at school and at the university with the colonel, and had frequently helped him in his Latin exercises. The colonel having been always deficient in scholarship, he had early contracted an aversion to literature, which at last amounted to an antipathy even to the very sight of books, in consequence, perhaps, of his uncle's ardent and precipitate desire to make him apply to them whilst his head was full of tops and balls, kites and ponies. Be this as it may, commissioner Falconer thought his son Buckhurst might profit by his school friendship, and might now renew and improve the connexion. Accordingly Buckhurst waited upon the colonel — was immediately recognised, and received with promising demonstrations of joy.

It would be difficult, indeed impossible, to describe Colonel Hauton, so as to distinguish him from a thousand other young men of the same class, except, perhaps, that he might be characterised by having more exclusive and inveterate selfishness. Yet this was so far from appearing or being suspected on a first acquaintance, that he was generally thought a sociable, good-natured fellow. It was his absolute dependence upon others for daily amusement and ideas, or, rather, for knowing what to do with himself, that gave him this semblance of being sociable; the total want of proper pride and dignity in his whole deportment, a certain *slang* and familiarity of tone, gave superficial observers the notion that he was good-natured. It was Colonel Hauton's great ambition to look like his own coachman; he succeeded only so far as to look like his groom: but though he kept company with jockeys and coachmen, grooms and stable-boys, yet not the stiffest, haughtiest, flat-backed Don of Spain, in Spain's proudest days, could be more completely aristocratic in his principles, or more despotic in his habits. This

could not break out to his equals, and his equals cared little how he treated his inferiors. His present pleasure, or rather his present business, for no man made more a business of pleasure than Colonel Hauton, was *the turf*. Buckhurst Falconer could not here assist him as much as in making Latin verses—but he could admire and sympathise; and the colonel, proud of being now the superior, proud of his *knowing style* and his *capital* stud, enjoyed Buckhurst's company particularly, pressed him to stay at Clermont Park, and to accompany him to the races. There was to be a *famous* match between Colonel Hauton's High-Blood and Squire Burton's Wildfire; and the preparations of the horses and of their riders occupied the intervening days. With all imaginable care, anxiety, and solemnity, these important preparations were conducted. At stated hours, Colonel Haughton, and with him Buckhurst, went to see High-Blood rubbed down, and fed, and watered, and exercised, and minuted, and rubbed down, and littered. Next to the horse, the rider, Jack Giles, was to be attended to with the greatest solicitude; he was to be weighed—and starved—and watched—and drammed—and *sweated*—and weighed again—and so on in daily succession; and harder still, through this whole course he was to be kept in humour: "None that ever sarved man or beast," as the stable-boy declared, "ever worked harder for their bread than his master and master's companion did this week for their pleasure." At last the great, the important day arrived, and Jack Giles was weighed for the last time in public, and so was Tom Hand, Squire Burton's rider—and High-Blood and Wildfire were brought out; and the spectators assembled in the stand, and about the scales, were all impatience, especially those who had betted on either of the horses. And Now, Hauton!—Now, Burton!—Now, High-Blood!

—Now, Wildfire!—Now Jack Giles!—and—Now, Tom Hand! resounded on all sides. The gentlemen on the race-ground were all on tiptoe in their stirrups. The ladies in the stand stretched their necks of snow, and nobody looked at them.—Two men were run over, and nobody took them up.—Two ladies fainted, and two gentlemen betted across them. This was no time for nice observances—Jack Giles's spirit began to flag—and Tom Hand's judgment *to tell*—High-Blood, on the full stretch, was within view of the winning post, when Wildfire, quite in wind, was put to his speed by the judicious Tom Hand—he sprang forward, came up with High-Blood—passed him—Jack Giles strove in vain to regain his ground—High-Blood was blown, beyond the power of whip or spur—Wildfire reached the post, and Squire Burton won the match hollow.

His friends congratulated him and themselves loudly, and extolled Tom Hand and Wildfire to the skies. In the moment of disappointment, Colonel Hauton, out of humour, said something that implied a suspicion of unfairness on the part of Burton or Tom Hand, which the honest squire could not brook either for self or rider. He swore that his Tom Hand was as honest a fellow as any in England, and he would back him for such. The colonel, depending on his own and his uncle's importance, on his party and his flatterers, treated the squire with some of the haughtiness of rank, which the squire retorted with some rustic English humour. The colonel, who had not wit at will to put down his antagonist, became still more provoked to see that such a low-born fellow as the squire should and could laugh and make others laugh. For the lack of wit, the colonel had recourse to insolence, and went on from one impertinence to another, till the squire, enraged, declared that he

would not be browbeat by any lord's nephew or jackanapes colonel that ever wore a head; and as he spoke, tremendous in his ire, Squire Burton brandished high the British horse-whip. At this critical moment, as it has been asserted by some of the bystanders, the colonel *quailed* and backed a few paces; but others pretend that Buckhurst Falconer pushed before him. It is certain that Buckhurst stopped the blow—wrested the horse-whip from the squire—was challenged by him on the spot—accepted the challenge—fought the squire—*winged* him—appeared on the race-ground afterwards, and was admired by the ladies in public, and by his father in private, who looked upon the duel and horsewhipping, from which he thus saved his patron's nephew, as the most fortunate circumstance that could have happened to his son upon his entrance into life.

"Such an advantage as this gives us such a claim upon the colonel—and, indeed, upon the whole family. Lord Oldborough, having no children of his own, looks to the nephew as his heir; and though he may be vexed now and then by the colonel's extravagance, and angry that he could not give this nephew more of a political turn, yet such as he is, depend upon it he can do what he pleases with Lord Oldborough. Whoever has the nephew's ear, has the uncle's heart; or I should say, whoever has the nephew's heart, has the uncle's ear."

"Mayn't we as well put hearts out of the question on all sides, sir?" said Buckhurst.

"With all my heart," said his father, laughing, "provided we don't put a good living out of the question on our side."

Buckhurst looked averse, and said he did not know there was any such thing in question.

"No!" said his father: "was it then from the

pure and abstract love of being horsewhipped, or shot at, that you took this quarrel off his hands?"

"Faith! I did it from spirit, pure spirit," said Buckhurst: "I could not stand by, and see one who had been my schoolfellow horsewhipped—no, damn it, if he did not stand by himself, *yet* I could not but stand by *him*, for you know I was there as one of his party—and as I backed his bets on High-Blood, I could do no less than back his cause altogether.—Oh! I could not stand by and see *a chum* of my own horsewhipped."

"Well, that was all very spirited and generous; but now, as you are something too old for mere schoolboy notions," said the commissioner, "let us look a little farther, and see what we can make of it. It's only a silly boyish thing as you consider it; but I hope we can turn it to good account."

"I never thought of turning it to account, sir."

"Think of it now," said the father, a little provoked by the careless disinterestedness of the son. "In plain English, here is a colonel in his Majesty's service saved from a horsewhipping—a whole noble family saved from disgrace: these are things not to be forgotten; that is, not to be forgotten, if you force people to remember them: otherwise—my word for it—I know the great—the whole would be forgotten in a week. Therefore, leave me to follow the thing up properly with the uncle, and do you never let it sleep with the nephew: sometimes a bold stroke, sometimes a delicate touch, just as the occasion serves, or as may suit the company present—all that I trust to your own address and judgment."

"Trust nothing, sir, to my address or judgment; for in these things I have neither. I always act just from impulse and feeling, right or wrong—I have no talents for *finesse*—leave them all to Cunningham—

that's his trade, and he likes it, luckily: and you should be content with having one such genius in your family—no family could bear two."

"Come, come, pray be serious, Buckhurst. If you have not or will not use any common sense and address to advance yourself, leave that to me. You see how I have pushed up Cunningham already, and all I ask of you is to be quiet, and let me push you up."

"Oh! dear sir, I am very much obliged to you: if that is all, I will be quite quiet—so that I am not to do anything shabby or dirty for it. I should be vastly glad to get a good place, and be provided for handsomely."

"No doubt; and let me tell you that many I could name have, with inferior claims, and without any natural connexion or relationship, from the mere favour of proper friends, obtained Church benefices of much greater value than the living we have in our eye: you know——"

"I do not know, indeed," said Buckhurst; "I protest I have no living in my eye."

"What! not know that the living of Chipping-Friars is in the gift of Colonel Hauton—and the present incumbent has had one paralytic stroke already. There's a prospect for you, Buckhurst!"

"To be frank with you, sir, I have no taste for the Church."

"No taste for nine hundred a year, Buckhurst? No desire for fortune, Mr Philosopher?"

"Pardon me, a very strong taste for that, sir—not a bit of a philosopher—as much in love with fortune as any man, young or old: is there no way to fortune but through the Church?"

"None for you so sure and so easy, all circumstances considered," said his father. "I have planned and settled it, and you have nothing to do but to get

yourself ordained as soon as possible. I shall write to my friend the bishop for that purpose this very night."

"Let me beg, father, that you will not be so precipitate. Upon my word, sir, I cannot go into orders. I am not—in short, I am not fit for the Church."

The father stared with an expression between anger and astonishment.

"Have not you gone through the university?"

"Yes, sir: but—but I am scarcely sober, and *staid*, and moral enough for the Church. Such a wild fellow as I am, I really could not in conscience—I would not upon any account, for any living upon earth, or any emolument, go into the Church, unless I thought I should do credit to it."

"And why should not you do credit to the Church? I don't see that you are wilder than your neighbours, and need not be more scrupulous. There is G——, who at your age was wild enough, but he took up in time, and is now a plump dean. Then there is the bishop that is just made: I remember him such a youth as you are. Come, come, these are idle scruples. Let me hear no more, my dear Buckhurst, of your conscience."

"Dear sir, I never pleaded my conscience on any occasion before—you know that I am no Puritan—but really on this point I have some conscience, and I beg you not to press me farther. You have other sons; and if you cannot spare Cunningham, that treasure of diplomacy!—there's John; surely you might contrive to spare him for the Church."

"Spare him I would, and welcome. But you know I could never get John into orders."

"Why not, sir? John, I'll swear, would have no objection to the Church, provided you could get him a good fat living."

"But I am not talking of *his* objections. To be sure he would make no objection to a good fat living, nor would anybody in his senses, except yourself. But I ask you how I could possibly get your brother John into the Church? John's a dunce—and you know it."

"Nobody better, sir; but are there no dunces in the Church?—And as you are so good as to think that I'm no wilder than my neighbours, you surely will not say that my brother is more a dunce than his neighbours. Put him into the hands of a clever grinder or crammer, and they would soon cram the necessary portion of Latin and Greek into him, and they would get him through the university for us readily enough; and a degree once obtained, he might snap his fingers at Latin and Greek all the rest of his life. Once in orders, and he might sit down upon his fat living, or lie down content, all his days, only taking care to have some poor devil of a curate up and about, doing duty for him."

"So I find you have no great scruples for your brother, whatever you may have for yourself?"

"Sir, I am not the keeper of my brother's conscience. —Indeed, if I were, you might congratulate me in the words of Sir B. R. upon the possession of a sinecure place."

"It is a pity, Buckhurst, that you cannot use your wit for yourself as well as for other people. Ah! Buckhurst! Buckhurst! you will, I fear, do worse in the world than any of your brothers; for wits are always *unlucky:* sharp-sighted enough to everything else, but blind, stone-blind to their own interest. Wit is folly, when one is talking of serious business."

"Well, my dear father, *be agreeable*, and I will not be witty.—In fact, in downright earnest, the sum total of the business is, that I have a great desire to

go into the army, and I entreat you to procure me a commission."

"Then the sum total of the business is, that I will not; for I cannot afford to purchase you a commission, and to maintain you in the army——"

"But by using interest, perhaps, sir," said Buckhurst.

"My interest must be all for your brother John; for I tell you I can do nothing else for him but put him into the army.—He's a dunce.—I must get him a commission, and then I have done with him."

"I wish I was a dunce," said Buckhurst, sighing, "for then I might go into the army—instead of being forced into the Church."

"There's no force upon your inclinations, Buckhurst," said his father in a soft tone; "I only show you that it is impossible I should maintain you in the army, and, therefore, beg you to put the army out of your head. And I don't well see what else you could do. You have not application enough for the bar, nor have I any friends among the attorneys except Sharpe, who, between you and me, might take your dinners, and leave you without a brief afterwards. You have talents, I grant," continued the commissioner, "and if you had but application, and if your uncle the judge had not died last year——"

"O sir, he is dead, and we can't help it," interrupted Buckhurst. "And as for me, I never had, and never shall have any application: so pray put the bar out of your mind."

"Very cavalier indeed!—but I will make you serious at once, Buckhurst. You have nothing to expect from my death—I have not a farthing to leave you—my place, you know, is only for life—your mother's fortune is all in annuity, and two girls to be provided for—and to live as we must live—up to and

beyond my income—shall have nothing to leave. Though you are my eldest son, you see it is in vain to look to my death—so into the Church you must go, or be a beggar—and get a living or starve. Now I have done," concluded the commissioner, quitting his son; "and I leave you to think of what has been said."

Buckhurst thought and thought; but still his interest and his conscience were at variance, and he could not bring himself either to be virtuous or vicious enough to comply with his father's wishes. He could not decide to go into the Church merely from interested motives—from that his conscience revolted; he could not determine to make himself fit to do credit to the sacred profession—against this his habits and his love of pleasure revolted. He went to his brother John, to try what could be done with him. Latin and Greek were insuperable objections with John; besides, though he had a dull imagination in general, John's fancy had been smitten with one bright idea of an epaulette, from which no considerations, fraternal, political, moral, or religious, could distract his attention.—His genius, he said, was for the army, and into the army he would go. —So to his genius, Buckhurst, in despair, was obliged to leave him.—The commissioner neglected not to push the claim which he had on Colonel Hauton, and he chose his time so well, when proper people were by, and when the colonel did not wish to have the squire, and the horsewhip, and the duel, brought before the public, that he obtained, if not a full acknowledgment of obligation, a promise of doing anything and everything in his power for his friend Buckhurst. Anything and everything were indefinite, unsatisfactory terms; and the commissioner, bold in dealing with the timid temper of the colonel, though he had been cautious with the determined character of the uncle, pressed his point—named the living of Chipping-Friars—showed

how well he would be satisfied, and how well he could represent matters, if the promise was given; and at the same time made it understood how loudly he could complain, and how disgraceful his complaints might prove to the Oldborough family, if his son was treated with ingratitude. The colonel particularly dreaded that he should be suspected of want of spirit, and that his uncle should have the transaction laid before him in this improper point of view. He pondered for a few moments, and the promise for the living of Chipping-Friars was given. The commissioner, secure of this, next returned to the point with his son, and absolutely insisted upon his —going into orders. Buckhurst, who had tried wit and raillery in vain, now tried persuasion and earnest entreaties; but these were equally fruitless: his father, though an easy, good-natured man, except where his favourite plans were crossed, was peremptory, and, without using harsh words, he employed the harshest measures to force his son's compliance. Buckhurst had contracted some debts at the university, none of any great consequence, but such as he could not pay immediately.—The bets he had laid and lost upon High-Blood were also to be provided for; debts of honour claimed precedency, and must be directly discharged. His father positively refused to assist him, except upon condition of his compliance with his wishes; and so far from affording him any means of settling with his creditors, it has been proved, from the commissioner's *private* answers to some of their applications, that he not only refused to pay a farthing for his son, but encouraged the creditors to threaten him in the strongest manner with the terrors of law and arrest. Thus pressed and embarrassed, this young man, who had many honourable and religious sentiments and genuine feelings, but no power of adhering to principle or reason, was miserable beyond expression

one hour—and the next he became totally forgetful that there was anything to be thought of but the amusement of the moment. Incapable of coming to any serious decision, he walked up and down his room talking, partly to himself, and partly, for want of a better companion, to his brother John.

"So I must pay Wallis to-morrow, or he'll arrest me; and I must give my father an answer about the Church to-night—for he writes to the bishop, and will wait no longer. Oh! hang it! hang it! John! what the devil shall I do? My father won't pay a farthing for me, unless I go into the Church!"

"Well, then, why can't you go into the Church?" said John: "since you are through the university, the worst is over."

"But I think it so wrong, so base—for money—for emolument! I cannot do it. I am not fit for the Church—I know I shall disgrace it," said Buckhurst, striking his forehead: "I cannot do it—I cannot—it is against my conscience."

John stopped, as he was filling his shooting-pouch, and looked at Buckhurst (his mouth half open) with an expression of surprise at these demonstrations of sensibility. He had some sympathy for the external symptoms of pain which he saw in his brother, but no clear conception of the internal cause.

"Why, Buckhurst," said he, "if you cannot do it, you can't, you know, Buckhurst: but I don't see why you should be a disgrace to the Church more than another, as my father says. If I was but through the university, I had as lieve go into the Church as not—that's all I can say. And if my genius was not for the military line, there's nothing I should relish better than the living of Chipping-Friars, I'm sure. The only thing that I see against it is, that that paralytic incumbent may live many a

year: but, then, you get your debts paid now by only going into orders, and that's a great point. But if it goes against your conscience—you know best—if you can't, you can't."

"After all, I can't go to jail—I can't let myself be arrested—I can't starve—I can't be a beggar," said Buckhurst; "and, as you say, I should be so easy if these cursed debts were paid—and if I got this living of nine hundred a year, how comfortable I should be! Then I could marry, by Jove! and I'd propose directly for Caroline Percy, for I'm confoundedly in love with her—such a sweet-tempered, good creature!—not a girl so much admired! Colonel Hauton, and G——, and P. and D——, asked me, 'Who is that pretty girl?'—She certainly is a very pretty girl."

"She certainly is," repeated John. "This devil of a fellow never cleans my gun."

"Not regularly handsome neither," pursued Buckhurst; "but, as Hauton says, fascinating and new; and a new face in public is a great matter. Such a fashionable-looking figure, too—though she has not *come out* yet; dances charmingly—would dance divinely, if she would let herself out; and she sings and plays like an angel, fifty times better than our two precious sisters, who have been *at it* from their cradles, with all the signor *Squalicis* at their elbows. Caroline Percy never exhibits in public: the mother does not like it, I suppose."

"So I suppose," said John. "Curse this flint—flints are growing worse and worse every day—I wonder what in the world are become of all the good flints there used to be!"

"Very unlike our mother, I am sure," continued Buckhurst. "There are Georgiana and Bell at all the parties and concerts as regularly as any of the

professors, standing up in the midst of the singing men and women, favouring the public in as fine a bravura style, and making as ugly faces as the best of them. Do you remember the Italian's compliment to Miss ****** ?—'I vish, miss, I had your *assurance.*'"

"Very good, ha!—very fair, faith!" said John. "Do you know what I've done with my powder-horn?"

"Not I—put it in the oven, may be, to dry," said Buckhurst. "But as I was saying of my dear Caroline ——*My* Caroline! she is not mine yet."

"Very true," said John.

"Very true! Why, John, you are enough to provoke a saint!"

"I was agreeing with you, I thought," said John.

"But nothing is so provoking as always agreeing with one—and I can tell you, Mr Verytrue, that though Caroline Percy is not mine yet, I have nevertheless a little suspicion, that, such even as I am, she might readily be brought to love, honour, and obey me."

"I don't doubt it, for I never yet knew a woman that was not ready enough to be married," quoth John. "But this is not the right ramrod, after all."

"There you are wrong, John, on the other side," said Buckhurst; "for I can assure you, Miss Caroline Percy is not one of your young ladies who would marry anybody. And even though she might like me, I am not at all sure that she would marry me—for obedience to the best of fathers might interfere."

"There's the point," said John; "for thereby hangs the fortune; and it would be a *deuced* thing to have the girl without the fortune."

"Not so *deuced* a thing to me as you think," said Buckhurst, laughing; "for, poor as I am, I can assure you the fortune is not my object—I am not a mercenary dog."

"By-the-bye," cried John, "now you talk of dogs, I wish to Heaven above, you had not given away that fine puppy of mine to that foolish old man, who never was out a shooting in his days—the dog's just as much thrown away as if you had drowned him. Now, do you know, if I had had *the making* of that puppy——"

"Puppy!" exclaimed Buckhurst: "is it possible you can be thinking of a puppy, John, when I am talking to you of what is of so much consequence?—when the whole happiness of my life is at stake?"

"Stake!—Well, but what can I do more?" said John: "have not I been standing here this half-hour with my gun in my hand this fine day, listening to you prosing about I don't know what?"

"That's the very thing I complain of—that you do not know what: a pretty brother!" said Buckhurst.

John made no further reply, but left the room sullenly, whistling as he went.

Left to his own cogitations, Buckhurst fell into a reverie upon the charms of Caroline Percy, and upon the probable pleasure of dancing with her at the race-ball; after this, he recurred to the bitter recollection, that he must decide about his debts, and the Church. A bright idea came into his mind, that he might have recourse to Mr Percy, and, perhaps, prevail upon him to persuade his father not to force him to a step which he could not reconcile either to his conscience or his inclination.—No sooner thought than done.—He called for his horse and rode as hard as he could to Percy Hall.—When a boy he had been intimate in the Percy family; but he had been long absent at school and at the university; they had seen him only during the vacations, and since his late return to the country. Though Mr Percy could not entirely approve of his character, yet he thought there were many good points about Buckhurst; the frankness and candour with which

he now laid his whole mind and all his affairs open to him — debts — love — fears — hopes — follies — faults — without reserve or extenuation, interested Mr Percy in his favour.—Pitying his distress, and admiring the motives from which he acted, Mr Percy said, that though he had no right to interfere in Mr Falconer's family affairs, yet that he could, and would, so far assist Buckhurst, as to lend him the money for which he was immediately pressed, that he might not be driven by necessity to go into that profession, which ought to be embraced only from the highest and purest motives. Buckhurst thanked him with transports of gratitude for this generous kindness, which was far beyond his expectations, and which, indeed, had never entered into his hopes. Mr Percy seized the moment when the young man's mind was warmed with good feelings, to endeavour to bring him to serious thoughts and rational determinations about his future life. He represented, that it was unreasonable to expect that his father should let him go into the army, when he had received an education to prepare himself for a profession, in which his literary talents might be of advantage both to himself and his family; that Mr Falconer was not rich enough to forward two of his sons in the army; that if Buckhurst, from conscientious motives, declined the provision which his father had in view for him in the Church, he was bound to exert himself to obtain an independent maintenance in another line of life; that he had talents which would succeed at the bar, if he had application and perseverance sufficient to go through the necessary drudgery at the commencement of the study of the law.

Here Buckhurst groaned.—But Mr Percy observed that there was no other way of proving that he acted from conscientious motives respecting the Church; for otherwise it would appear that he preferred the army

only because he fancied it would afford a life of idleness and pleasure.—That this would also be his only chance of winning the approbation of the object of his affections, and of placing himself in a situation in which he could marry.——Buckhurst, who was capable of being strongly influenced by good motives, especially from one who had obliged him, instantly, and in the most handsome manner, acknowledged the truth and justice of Mr Percy's arguments, and declared that he was ready to begin the study of the law directly, if his father would consent to it; and that he would submit to any drudgery rather than do what he felt to be base and wrong. Mr Percy, at his earnest request, applied to Mr Falconer, and with all the delicacy that was becoming, claimed the right of relationship to speak of Mr Falconer's family affairs, and told him what he had ventured to do about Buckhurst's debts; and what the young man now wished for himself.—The commissioner looked much disappointed and vexed.

"The bar!" cried he: "Mr Percy, you don't know him as well as I do. I will answer for it, he will never go through with it—and then he is to change his profession again:—and all the expence and all the trouble is to fall on me!—and I am to provide for him at last!—In all probability, by the time Buckhurst knows his own mind, the paralytic incumbent will be dead, and the living of Chipping-Friars given away.—And where am I to find nine hundred a year, I pray you, at a minute's notice, for this conscientious youth, who, by that time, will tell me his scruples were all nonsense, and that I should have known better than to listen to them? Nine hundred a year does not come in a man's way at every turn of his life; and if he gives it up now, it is not my fault—let him look to it."

Mr Percy replied, "That Buckhurst had declared himself ready to abide by the consequences, and that

he promised he would never complain of the lot he had chosen for himself, much less reproach his father for his compliance, and that he was resolute to maintain himself at the bar."

"Yes: very fine.—And how long will it be before he makes nine hundred a year at the bar?"

Mr Percy, who knew that none but worldly considerations made any impression upon this father, suggested that he would have to maintain his son during the life of the paralytic incumbent, and the expence of Buckhurst's being at the bar would not probably be greater; and though it might be several years before he could make nine hundred, or perhaps, one hundred a year at the bar, yet that if he succeeded, which, with Buckhurst's talents, nothing but the want of perseverance could prevent, he might make nine thousand a year by the profession of the law—more than in the scope of human probability, and with all the patronage his father's address could procure, he could hope to obtain in the Church.

"Well, let him try—let him try," repeated the commissioner, who, vexed as he was, did not choose to run the risk of disobliging Mr Percy, losing a good match for him, or undergoing the scandal of its being known that he forced his son into the Church.

For obtaining this consent, however reluctantly granted by the commissioner, Buckhurst warmly thanked Mr Percy, who made one condition with him, that he would go up to town immediately to commence his studies.

This Buckhurst faithfully promised to do, and only implored permission to declare his attachment to Caroline.—Caroline was at this time not quite eighteen, too young, her father said, to think of forming any serious engagement, even were it with a person suited to her in fortune and in every other respect.

Buckhurst declared that he had no idea of endeavouring even to obtain from Miss Caroline Percy any promise or engagement.—He had been treated, he said, too generously by her father, to attempt to take any step without his entire approbation.

He knew he was not, and could not for many years, be in circumstances that would enable him to support a daughter of Mr Percy's in the station to which she was, by her birth and fortune, entitled.—All he asked, he repeated, was to be permitted to declare to her his passion.

Mr Percy thought it was more prudent to let it be declared openly than to have it secretly suspected; therefore he consented to this request, trusting much to Buckhurst's honour and to Caroline's prudence.

To this first declaration of love Caroline listened with a degree of composure which astonished and mortified her lover. He had flattered himself that, at least, her vanity or pride would have been apparently gratified by her conquest.—But there was none of the flutter of vanity in her manner, nor any of the repressed satisfaction of pride. There were in her looks and words only simplicity and dignity.—She said that she was at present occupied happily in various ways, endeavouring to improve herself, and that she should be sorry to have her mind turned from these pursuits; she desired to secure time to compare and judge of her own tastes, and of the characters of others, before she should make any engagement, or form an attachment on which the happiness of her life must depend. She said she was equally desirous to keep herself free, and to avoid injuring the happiness of the man who had honoured her by his preference; therefore she requested he would discontinue a pursuit, which she could not encourage him to hope would ever be successful.—Long before the time when she should think

it prudent to marry, even if she were to meet with a character perfectly suited to hers, she hoped that her cousin Buckhurst would be united to some woman who would be able to return his affection.

The manner in which all this was said convinced Buckhurst that she spoke the plain and exact truth. From the ease and frankness with which she had hitherto conversed with him, he had flattered himself that it would not be difficult to prepossess her heart in his favour; but now, when he saw the same ease and simplicity unchanged in her manner, he was convinced that he had been mistaken. He had still hopes that in time he might make an impression upon her, and he urged that she was not yet sufficiently acquainted with his character to be able to judge whether or not it would suit hers. She frankly told him all she thought of him, and in doing so impressed him with the conviction that she had both discerned the merits and discovered the defects of his character: she gave him back a representation of himself, which he felt to be exactly just, and yet which struck him with all the force of novelty.

"It is myself," he exclaimed: "but I never knew myself till now."

He had such pleasure in hearing Caroline speak of him, that he wished even to hear her speak of his faults—of these he would, however, have been better pleased, if she had spoken with less calmness and indulgence.

"She is a great way from love as yet," thought Buckhurst. "It is astonishing, that with powers and knowledge on all other subjects so far above her age, she should know so little even of the common language of sentiment; very extraordinary, that with so much kindness, and such an amiable disposition, she should have so little sensibility."

The novelty of this insensibility, and of this perfect simplicity, so unlike all he had observed in the manners and minds of other young ladies to whom he had been accustomed, had, however, a great effect upon her lover. The openness and unaffected serenity of Caroline's countenance at this moment appeared to him more charming than any other thing he had ever beheld in the most finished coquette, or the most fashionable beauty.

What a divine creature she will be a few years hence! thought he. The time will come, when Love may waken this Psyche!—And what glory it would be to me to produce to the world such perfection!

With these mixed ideas of love and glory, Buckhurst took leave of Caroline; still he retained hope in spite of her calm and decided refusal. He knew the power of constant attention, and the display of ardent passion, to win the female heart. He trusted also in no slight degree to the reputation he had already acquired of being a favourite with the fair sex.

Chapter iv.

BUCKHURST Falconer returned to Percy Hall.

He came provided with something like an excuse—he had business—his father had desired him to ask Mr Percy to take charge of a box of family papers for him, as he apprehended, that, when he was absent from the country, his steward had not been as careful of them as he ought to have been.

Mr Percy willingly consented to take charge of the papers, but he desired that, before they were left with him, Buckhurst should take a list of them.

Buckhurst was unprepared for this task.

His head was intent on a ball and on Caroline. However, he was obliged to undergo this labour; and when he had finished it, Mr Percy, who happened to be preparing some new leases of considerable farms, was so busy, in the midst of his papers, that there was no such thing as touching upon the subject of the ball. At length the ladies of the family appeared, and all the parchments were at last out of the way—Buckhurst began upon his real business, and said he meant to delay going to town a few days longer, because there was to be a ball early in the ensuing week.—"Nothing more natural," said Mr Percy, "than to wish to go to a ball; yet," added he gravely, "when a man of honour gives his promise that nothing shall prevent him from commencing his studies immediately, I did not expect that the first temptation——"

"Oh! my dear Mr Percy," said Buckhurst, endeavouring to laugh away the displeasure, or rather the disappointment which he saw in Mr Percy's countenance, "a few days can make no difference."

"Only the difference of a term," said Mr Percy; "and the difference between promising and performing. You thought me unjust yesterday, when I told you that I feared you would prefer present amusement to future happiness."

"Amusement!" exclaimed Buckhurst, turning suddenly towards Caroline; "do you imagine *that* is my object?" Then approaching her, he said in a low voice, "It is a natural mistake for you to make, Miss Caroline Percy—for you—who know nothing of love. Amusement! It is not amusement that detains me—can you think I would stay for a ball, unless I expected to meet you there?"

"Then I will not go," said Caroline: "it would be coquetry to meet you there, when, as I thought, I had distinctly explained to you yesterday——"

"Oh! don't repeat that," interrupted Buckhurst: "a lady is never bound to remember what she said yesterday—especially if it were a cruel sentence; I hope hereafter you will change your mind—let me live upon hope."

"I will never give any false hopes," said Caroline; "and since I cannot add to your happiness, I will take care not to diminish it. I will not be the cause of your breaking your promise to my father: I will not be the means of tempting you to lower yourself in his opinion ——I will not go to this ball."

Buckhurst smiled, went on with some commonplace raillery about cruelty, and took his leave, fancying that Caroline could not be in earnest in her threat, as he called it.—As his disobedience would have the excuse of *love*, he thought he might venture to transgress the letter of the promise.

When the time came, he went to the ball, almost certain that Caroline would break her resolution, as he knew that she had never yet been at a public assembly, and it was natural that one so sure of being admired would be anxious to be seen. His surprise and disappointment were great when no Caroline appeared.

He asked Rosamond if her sister was not well?

"Perfectly well."

"Then why is not she here?"

"Don't you recollect her telling you that she would not come?"

"Yes: but I did not think she was in earnest."

"How little you know of Caroline," replied Rosamond, "if you imagine that either in trifles, or in matters of consequence, *she* would say one thing and do another."

"I feel," said Buckhurst, colouring, "what that emphasis on *she* means. But I did not think you

would have reproached me so severely. *I thought* my cousin Rosamond was my friend."

"So I am—but not a friend to your faults."

"Surely it is no great crime in a young man to like going to a ball better than going to the Temple! But I am really concerned," continued Buckhurst, "that I have deprived Miss Caroline Percy of the pleasure of being here to-night—and this was to have been her first appearance in public—I am quite sorry."

"Caroline is not at all impatient to appear in public; and as to the pleasure of being at a ball, it costs her little to sacrifice that, or any pleasure of her own, for the advantage of others."

"When Miss Caroline Percy said something about my falling in her father's opinion for such a trifle, I could not guess that she was serious."

"She does not," replied Rosamond, "think it a trifle to break a promise."

Buckhurst looked at his watch. "The mail-coach will pass through this town in an hour. It shall take me to London—Good-bye—I will not stay another moment—I am gone. I wish I had gone yesterday—pray, my dear, good Rosamond, say so for me to Caroline."

At this moment a beautiful young lady, attended by a large party, entered the ball-room. Buckhurst stopped to inquire who she was.

"Did you never see my sister before?" replied Colonel Hauton—"Oh! I must introduce you, and you shall dance with her."

"You do me a great deal of honour—I shall be very happy—that is, I should be extremely happy—only unfortunately I am under a necessity of setting off immediately for London—I'm afraid I shall be late for the mail—Good night."

Buckhurst made an effort, as he spoke, to pass on; but Colonel Hauton bursting into one of his horse-laughs, held him fast by the arm, swore he must be drunk, for that he did not know what he was saying or doing.

Commissioner Falconer, who now came up, whispered to Buckhurst, "Are you mad? You can't refuse—you'll affront for ever!"

"I can't help it," said Buckhurst: "I'm sorry for it—I cannot help it."

He still kept on his way towards the door.

"But," expostulated the commissioner, following him out, "you can surely stay, be introduced, and pay your compliments to the young lady—you are time enough for the mail. Don't affront people for nothing, who may be of the greatest use to you."

"But, my dear father, I don't want people to be of use to me."

"Well, at any rate, turn back just to see what a charming creature Miss Hauton is. Such an entrée! So much the air of a woman of fashion! every eye riveted—the whole room in admiration of her!"

"I did not see anything remarkable about her," said Buckhurst, turning back to look at her again. "If you think I should affront—I would not really affront Hauton, who has always been so civil to me—I'll go and be introduced and pay my compliments, since you say it is necessary; but I shall not stay five minutes."

Buckhurst returned to be introduced to Miss Hauton. This young lady was so beautiful that she would, in all probability, have attracted general attention, even if she had not been the sister of a man of Colonel Hauton's fortune, and the niece of a nobleman of Lord Oldborough's political consequence; but undoubtedly these circumstances much increased the power of her

charms over the imaginations of her admirers. All the gentlemen at this ball were unanimous in declaring that she was a most fascinating creature. Buckhurst Falconer and Godfrey Percy were introduced to her nearly at the same time. Godfrey asked her to dance—and Buckhurst could not help staying to see her. She danced so gracefully, that while he thought he had stayed only five minutes, he delayed a quarter of an hour. Many gentlemen were ambitious of the honour of Miss Hauton's hand; but, to their disappointment, she declined dancing any more; and though Buckhurst Falconer had determined not to have stayed, nor to dance with her, yet an undefinable perverse curiosity induced him to delay a few minutes, to determine whether she conversed as well as she danced. The sound of her voice was sweet and soft, and there was an air of languor in her whole person and manner, with an apparent indifference to general admiration, which charmed Godfrey Percy, especially as he perceived that she could be animated by his conversation. To Buckhurst's wit she listened with politeness, but obviously without interest. Buckhurst looked at his watch again—but it was now too late for the mail. Rosamond was surprised to see him still in the ball-room. He laid all the blame on his father, and pleaded that he was detained by parental orders which he could not disobey. He sat beside Rosamond at supper, and used much eloquence to convince her that he had obeyed against his will.

In the meantime Godfrey, seated next to his fair partner, became every moment more and more sensible of the advantages of his situation. Towards the end of supper, when the buzz of general conversation increased, it happened that somebody near Miss Hauton spoke of a marriage that was likely to take place in the fashionable world, and all who thought them-

selves, or who wished to be thought good authorities, began to settle *how* it would be, and *when* it would be: but a gentleman of Godfrey's acquaintance, who sat next to him, said in a low voice, "It will never be."—"Why?" said Godfrey.—The gentleman answered in a whisper, "There is an insuperable objection: *the mother*—don't you recollect?—the mother was a *divorcée*; and no man of sense would venture to marry the daughter——"

"No, certainly," said Godfrey; "I did not know the fact."

He turned, as he finished speaking, to ask Miss Hauton if she would permit him to help her to something that stood before him; but to his surprise and alarm he perceived that she was pale, trembling, and scarcely able to support herself.—He, for the first moment, thought only that she was taken suddenly ill, and he was going to call Lady Oldborough's attention to her indisposition—but Miss Hauton stopped him, and said in a low tremulous voice—"Take no notice." He then poured out a glass of water, put it within her reach, turned away in obedience to her wishes, and sat in such a manner as to screen her from observation. A confused recollection now came across his mind of his having heard many years ago, when he was a child, of the divorce of some Lady Anne Hauton, and the truth occurred to him, that this was Miss Hauton's mother, and that Miss Hauton had overheard the whisper.

In a few moments, anxious to see whether she had recovered, and yet afraid to distress her by his attention, he half turned his head, and looking down at her plate, asked if she was better.

"Quite well, thank you."

He then raised his eyes, and looking as unconcernedly as he could, resumed his former attitude, and began

some trifling conversation; but whatever effort he made to appear the same as before, there was some constraint, or some difference in his voice and manner, which the young lady perceived—her voice immediately changed and faltered—he spoke quickly—both spoke at the same time, without knowing what either said or what they said themselves—their eyes met, and both were silent—Miss Hauton blushed deeply. He saw that his conjecture was right, and she saw, by Godfrey's countenance, that her secret was discovered: her eyes fell, she grew pale, and instantly fainted. Lady Oldborough came to her assistance, but she was too helpless a fine lady to be of the least use: she could only say that it must be the heat of the room, and that she should faint herself in another moment.

Godfrey whispered to his mother—and Miss Hauton was carried into the open air. Lady Oldborough and her smelling-bottle followed. Godfrey, leaving the young lady with them, returned quickly to the supper-room, to prevent any one from intruding upon her. He met Buckhurst Falconer and Colonel Hauton at the door, and stopped them with assurances that Miss Hauton had all the assistance she could want.

"I'll tell you what she wants," cried the colonel to Buckhurst; "a jaunt to Cheltenham, which would do her and me, too, a d—d deal of good; for now the races are over, what the devil shall we do with ourselves here? I'll rattle Maria off the day after to-morrow in my phaeton. No—Buckhurst, my good fellow, I'll drive you in the phaeton, and I'll make Lady Oldborough take Maria in the coach."

Godfrey Percy, who, as he passed, could not avoid hearing this invitation, did not stay to learn Buckhurst's answer, but went instantly into the room. No one, not even the gentleman whose whisper had occasioned it, had the least suspicion of the real cause of Miss

Hauton's indisposition. Lady Oldborough had assigned as the occasion of the young lady's illness "the heat of the room," and an old medical dowager was eager to establish that "it was *owing* to some strawberry ice, as, to her certain knowledge, ice, in some shape or other, was the cause of most of the mischief in the world."

Whilst the partizans of heat and ice were still battling, and whilst the dancers had quite forgotten Miss Hauton, and everything but themselves, the young lady returned to the room. Godfrey went to order Mrs Percy's carriage, and the Percy family left the ball.

When Godfrey found himself in the carriage with his own family, he began eagerly to talk of Miss Hauton; he was anxious to know what all and each thought of her, in general, and in particular: he talked so much of her, and seemed so much surprised that anybody could wish to talk or think of anything else, that Mrs Percy could not help smiling. Mr Percy, leaning back in the carriage, said that he felt inclined to sleep.

"To sleep!" repeated Godfrey: "is it possible that you can be sleepy, sir?"

"Very possible, my dear son—it is past four o'clock, I believe."

Godfrey was silent for some minutes, and he began to think over every word and look that had passed between him and Miss Hauton. He had been only amused with her conversation, and charmed by her grace and beauty in the beginning of the evening; but the sensibility she had afterwards shown had touched him so much, that he was extremely anxious to interest his father in her favour. He explained the cause of her fainting, and asked whether she was not much to be pitied. All pitied her—and Godfrey, encouraged

by this pity, went on to prove that she ought not to be blamed for her mother's faults; that nothing could be more unjust and cruel than to think ill of the innocent daughter, because her mother had been imprudent.

"But, Godfrey," said Rosamond, "you seem to be answering some one who has attacked Miss Hauton —whom are you contending with?"

"With himself," said Mr Percy. "His prudence tells him that the gentleman was quite right in saying that no man of sense would marry the daughter of a woman who had conducted herself ill, and yet he wishes to make an exception to the general rule in favour of pretty Miss Hauton."

"Pretty! My dear father, she is a great deal more than pretty: if she were only pretty, I should not be so much interested about her. But putting her quite out of the question, I do not agree with the general principle that a man should not marry the daughter of a woman who has conducted herself ill."

"I think you did agree with it till you knew that it applied to Miss Hauton's case," said Mr Percy. "as well as I remember, Godfrey, I heard you once answer on a similar occasion, 'No, no—I will have nothing to do with any of the daughters of that mother —black cats have black kittens'—or 'black dogs have black puppies'—I forget which you said."

"Whichever it was, I am ashamed of having quoted such a vulgar proverb," said Godfrey.

"It may be a vulgar proverb, but I doubt whether it be a vulgar error," said Mr Percy: "I have great faith in the wisdom of nations. So much so in the present instance, that I own I would rather a son of mine were to marry a well-conducted farmer's daughter of *honest parentage*, than the daughter of an ill-conducted lady of rank or fashion. The farmer's daughter might be trained into a gentlewoman, and might make my son

at least a faithful wife, which is more than he could expect, or than I should expect, from the young lady, who had early seen the example of what was bad, and whose predispositions would be provided with the excuse of the old song."

Godfrey took fire at this, and exclaimed against the injustice of a doctrine which would render wretched for life many young women who might possess every amiable and estimable quality, and who could never remedy the misfortune of their birth. Godfrey urged, that whilst this would render the good miserable, it would be the most probable means of driving the weak from despair into vice.

Rosamond eagerly joined her brother's side of the question. Mr Percy, though he knew, he said, that he must appear one of the "fathers with flinty hearts," protested that he felt great compassion for the unfortunate individuals, as much as a man who was not in love with any of them could reasonably be expected to feel.

"But now," continued he, "granting that all the consequences which Godfrey has predicted were to follow from my doctrine, yet I am inclined to believe that society would upon the whole be the gainer by such severity, or, as I am willing to allow it to be, such apparent injustice. The adherence to this principle would be the misery, perhaps the ruin, of a few; but would I think tend to the safety and happiness of so many, that the evil would be nothing in comparison to the good. The certainty of shame descending to the daughters would be a powerful means of deterring mothers from ill-conduct; and might probably operate more effectually to restrain licentiousness in high life than heavy damages, or the now transient disgrace of public trial and divorce. As to the apparent injustice of punishing children for the faults of their parents, it should be considered that in most other cases children

suffer discredit more or less for the faults of their parents of whatever kind; and that, on the other hand, they enjoy the advantage of the good characters which their parents establish. This *must* be so from the necessary effect of experience, and from the nature of human belief, except in cases where passion operates to destroy or suspend the power of reason——"

"That is not my case, I assure you, sir," interrupted Godfrey.

Mr Percy smiled, and continued:—"It appears to me highly advantageous, that *character*, in general, should descend to posterity as well as riches or honours, which are, in fact, often the representations, or consequences, in other forms, of different parts of character—industry, talents, courage. For instance, in the lower ranks of life it is a common saying, that a good name is the richest legacy a woman can leave her daughter. This idea should be impressed more fully than it is upon the higher classes. At present, money too frequently forms a compensation for everything in high life. It is not uncommon to see the natural daughters of men of rank, or of large fortune, portioned so magnificently, either with solid gold, or promised *family protection*, that their origin by the mother's side, and the character of the mother, are quite forgotten. Can this be advantageous to good morals? Surely a mother living in open defiance of the virtue of her sex should not see her illegitimate offspring instead of being her shame become her glory.—On the contrary, nothing could tend more to prevent the ill conduct of women in high life than the certainty that men who, from their fortune, birth, and character, might be deemed the most desirable matches, would shun alliances with the daughters of women of tainted reputation."

Godfrey eagerly declared his contempt for those men who married for money or ambition either ille-

gitimate or legitimate daughters. He should be sorry, he said, to do anything that would countenance vice, which ought to be put out of countenance by all means—if possible. But he was not the guardian of public morals; and even if he were, he should still think it unjust that the innocent should suffer for the guilty. That for his own part, if he could put his father's disapprobation out of the question, he should easily settle his mind, and overcome all objections in a *prudential* point of view to marrying an amiable woman who had had the misfortune to have a worthless mother.

Mrs Percy had not yet given her opinion—all eyes turned towards her. As usual, she spoke with persuasive gentleness and good sense; she marked where each had, in the warmth of argument, said more than they intended, and she seized the just medium by which all might be conciliated. She said that she thought the important point to be considered was, what the *education* of the daughter had been; on this a prudent man would form his opinion, not on the mere accident of her birth. He would inquire whether the girl had lived with the ill-conducted mother—had been in situations to be influenced by her example, or by that of the company which she kept. If such had been the case, Mrs Percy declared she thought it would be imprudent and wrong to marry the daughter. But if the daughter had been separated in early childhood from the mother, had never been exposed to the influence of her example, had, on the contrary, been educated carefully in strict moral and religious principles, it would be cruel, because unnecessary, to object to an alliance with such a woman. The objection would appear inconsistent, as well as unjust, if made by those who professed to believe in the unlimited power of education.

Godfrey rubbed his hands with delight—Mr Percy smiled, and acknowledged that he was compelled to admit the truth and justice of this statement.

"Pray do you know, Godfrey," said Rosamond, "whether Miss Hauton lived with her mother, or was educated by her?"

"I cannot tell," said Godfrey; "but I will make it my business to find out. At all events, my dear madam," continued he, "a child cannot decide by whom she will be educated. It is not her fault if her childhood be passed with a mother who is no fit guardian for her."

"I acknowledge," said Mrs Percy, "that is her misfortune."

"And would you make it an irreparable misfortune?" said Godfrey, in a expostulatory tone: "my dear mother—only consider."

"My dear son, I do consider," said Mrs Percy; "but I cannot give up the point of education. I should be very sorry to see a son of mine married to a woman who had been in this unfortunate predicament. But," added Mrs Percy, after a few minutes' silence, "if from the time her own will and judgment could be supposed to act, she had chosen for her companions respectable and amiable persons, and had conducted herself with uniform propriety and discretion, I think I might be brought to allow of an exception to my general principle." She looked at Mr Percy.

"Undoubtedly," said Mr Percy; "exceptions must not merely be allowed, but will force themselves in favour of superior merit, of extraordinary excellence, which will rise above every unfavourable circumstance in any class, in any condition of life in which it may exist, which will throw off any

stigma, however disgraceful, counteract all prepossessions, however potent, rise against all power of depression—redeem a family—redeem a race."

"Now, father, you speak like yourself!" cried Godfrey: "this is all I ask—all I wish."

"And here," continued Mr Percy, "is an adequate motive for a good and great mind—yes, *great*—for I believe there are great minds in the female as well as in the male part of the creation; I say, here is an adequate motive to excite a woman of a good and great mind to exert herself to struggle against the misfortunes of her birth."

"For instance," said Rosamond, "my sister Caroline is just the kind of woman, who, if she had been one of these unfortunate daughters, would have made herself an exception."

"Very likely," said Mr Percy, laughing; "but why you should go so far out of your way to make an unfortunate daughter of poor Caroline, and why you should picture to yourself, as Dr Johnson would say, what would be probable in an impossible situation, I cannot conceive, except for the pleasure of exercising, as you do upon most occasions, a fine romantic imagination."

"At all events *I* am perfectly satisfied," said Godfrey. "Since you admit of exceptions, sir, I agree with you entirely."

"No, not entirely. I am sure you cannot agree with me entirely, until I admit Miss Hauton to be one of my exceptions."

"That will come in time, if she deserve it," said Mrs Percy.

Godfrey thanked his mother with great warmth, and observed, that she was always the most indulgent of friends.

"But remember my *if*," said Mrs Percy: "I know

nothing of Miss Hauton at present, except that she is very pretty, and that she has engaging manners—Do you, my dear Godfrey?"

"Yes, indeed, ma'am, I know a great deal more of her."

"Did you ever see her before this night?"

"Never," said Godfrey.

"And at a ball!" said Mrs Percy: "you must have wonderful penetration into character.—But Cupid, though blindfold, can see more at a single glance than a philosophic eye can discover with the most minute examination."

"But, Cupid out of the question, let me ask you, mother," said Godfrey, "whether you do not think Miss Hauton has a great deal of sensibility? You saw that there was no affectation in her fainting."

"None, none," said Mrs Percy.

"There, father!" cried Godfrey, in an exulting tone; "and sensibility is the foundation of everything that is most amiable and charming, of every grace, of every virtue in woman."

"Yes," said Mr Percy, "and perhaps of some of their errors and vices. It depends upon how it is governed, whether sensibility be a curse or a blessing to its possessor, and to society."

"A curse!" cried Godfrey; "yes, if a woman be doomed——"

"Come, come, my dear Godfrey," interrupted Mr Percy, "do not let us talk any more upon the subject just now, because you are too much interested to reason coolly."

Rosamond then took her turn to talk of what was uppermost in her thoughts—Buckhurst Falconer, whom she alternately blamed and pitied, accused and defended; sometimes rejoicing that Caroline had rejected his suit, sometimes pitying him for his disappointment,

and repeating that with such talents, frankness, and generosity of disposition, it was much to be regretted that he had not that rectitude of principle, and steadiness of character, which alone could render him worthy of Caroline. Then passing from compassion for the son to indignation against the father, she observed, "that commissioner Falconer seemed determined to counteract all that was good in his son's disposition, that he actually did everything in his power to encourage Buckhurst in a taste for dissipation, as it seemed on purpose to keep him in a state of dependence, and to enslave him to the *great*."

"I hope, with all my heart I hope," continued Rosamond, "that Buckhurst will have sense and steadiness enough to refuse; but I heard his father supporting that foolish Colonel Hauton's persuasions, and urging his poor son to go with those people to Cheltenham. Now, if once he gets into that extravagant, dissipated set, he will be ruined for ever!—Adieu to all hopes of him. He will no more go to the bar than I shall—he will think of nothing but pleasure; he will run in debt again, and then farewell principle, and with principle, farewell all hopes of him. But I think he will have sense and steadiness enough to resist his father, and to refuse to accompany this profligate patron, Colonel Hauton.—Godfrey, what is your opinion? Do you think Buckhurst will go?"

"I do not know," replied Godfrey: "in his place I should find it very easy, but in my own case, I confess, I should feel it difficult, to refuse, if I were pressed to join a party of pleasure with Miss Hauton."

Chapter b.

GODFREY Percy went in the morning to inquire after the health of his fair partner: this was only a common civility. On his way thither he overtook and joined a party of gentlemen, who were also going to Clermont Park. They entered into conversation, and talked of the preceding night—one of the gentlemen, an elderly man, who had not been at the ball, happened to be acquainted with Miss Hauton, and with her family. Godfrey heard from him all the particulars respecting Lady Anne Hauton, and was thrown into a melancholy reverie by learning that Miss Hauton had been educated by this mother, and had always lived with her till her ladyship's death, which happened about two years before this time.—After receiving this intelligence, Godfrey heard little more of the conversation that passed till he reached Clermont Park.—A number of young people were assembled in the music-room practising for a concert. —Miss Hauton was at the pianoforte when he entered the room: she was sitting with her back to the door, surrounded by a crowd of amateurs; she did not see him—he stood behind listening to her singing. Her voice was delightful; but he was surprised and not pleased by the choice of her songs: she was singing, with some other high-bred young ladies, songs which, to use the gentlest expression, were rather too *anacreontic* —songs which, though sanctioned by fashion, were not such as a young lady of taste would prefer, or such as a man of delicacy would like to hear from his sister or his wife. They were nevertheless highly applauded by all the audience, except by Godfrey, who remained silent behind the young lady. In the fluctuation of the crowd he was pressed nearer and nearer to her chair.

As she finished singing a fashionable air, she heard a sigh from the person behind her.

"That's your favourite, I think?" said she, turning round and looking up. "Mr Percy! I—I thought it was Mr Falconer." Face, neck, hands, suddenly blushed: she stooped for a music-book, and searched for some time in that attitude for she knew not what, whilst all the gentlemen officiously offered their services, and begged only to know for what book she was looking.

"Come, come, Maria," cried Colonel Hauton, "what the d—— are you about?—Can't you give us another of these? You can't be better. Come, you're keeping Miss Drakelow."

"Go on, Miss Drakelow, if you please, without me."

"Impossible. Come, come, Maria, what the deuce are you at?"

Miss Hauton, afraid to refuse her brother, afraid to provoke the comments of the company, began to sing, or rather to attempt to sing—her voice faltered; she cleared her throat, and began again—worse still, she was out of tune: she affected to laugh. Then, pushing back her chair, she rose, drew her veil over her face, and said, "I have sung till I have no voice left.—Does nobody walk this morning?"

"No, no," said Colonel Hauton; "who the deuce would be *bored* with being broiled at this time of day? Miss Drakelow—Miss Chatterton, give us some more music, I beseech you; for I like music better in a morning than at night—the mornings, when one can't go out, are so confoundedly long and heavy."

The young ladies played, and Miss Hauton seated herself apart from the group of musicians, upon a

bergère, leaning on her hand, in a melancholy attitude. Buckhurst Falconer followed and sat down beside her, endeavouring to entertain her with some witty anecdote.

She smiled with effort, listened with painful attention, and the moment the anecdote was ended, her eyes wandered out of the window. Buckhurst rose, vacated his seat, and before any of the other gentlemen who had gathered round could avail themselves of that envied place, Miss Hauton, complaining of the intolerable heat, removed nearer to the window, to an ottoman, one half of which was already so fully occupied by a large dog of her brother's, that she was in no danger from any other intruder. Some of the gentlemen, who were not blessed with much sagacity, followed to talk to her of the beauty of the dog which she was stroking; but to a eulogium upon its long ears, and even to a quotation from Shakspeare about dewlaps, she listened with so vacant an air, that her followers gave up the point, and successively retired, leaving her to her meditations. Godfrey, who had kept aloof, had in the meantime been looking at some books that lay on a reading table. —*Maria Hauton* was written in the first page of several of them.—All were novels—some French, and some German, of a sort which he did not like.

"What have you there, Mr Percy?" said Miss Hauton.—"Nothing worth your notice, I am afraid. I daresay you do not like novels."

"Pardon me, I like some novels very much."

"Which?" said Miss Hauton, rising and approaching the table.

"All that are just representations of life and manners, or of the human heart," said Godfrey, "provided they are——"

"Ah! the human heart!" interrupted Miss Hauton:

"the heart only can understand the heart—who, in modern times, can describe the human heart?"

"Not to speak of foreigners—Miss Burney—Mrs Inchbald—Mrs Opie," said Godfrey.

"True; and yet I—and yet—" said Miss Hauton, pausing, and sighing.

"And yet that was not what I was thinking of," she should have said, had she finished her sentence with the truth; but this not being convenient, she left it unfinished, and began a new one, with "Some of these novels are sad trash—I hope Mr Godfrey Percy will not judge of my taste by them: that would be condemning me for the crimes of my bookseller, who will send us down everything new that comes out."

Godfrey disclaimed the idea of condemning or blaming Miss Hauton's taste: "he could not," he said, "be so presumptuous, so impertinent."

"So then," said she, "Mr Godfrey Percy is like all the rest of his sex, and I must not expect to hear the truth from him."—She paused—and looked at a print which he was examining.—"I would, however, rather have him speak severely than think hardly of me."

"He has no right to speak, and certainly no inclination to think hardly of Miss Hauton," replied Godfrey gravely, but with an emotion which he in vain endeavoured to suppress. To change the conversation, he asked her opinion about a figure in the print. She took out her glass, and stooped to look quite closely at it.—"Before you utterly condemn me," continued she, speaking in a low voice, "consider how fashion silences one's better taste and feelings, and how difficult it is when all around one——"

Miss Chatterton, Miss Drakelow, and some officers of their suite came up at this instant; a deputation,

they said, to bring Miss Hauton back, to favour them with another song, as she must now have recovered her voice.

"No—no—excuse me," said she, smiling languidly; "I beg not to be pressed any more. I am really not well—I absolutely cannot sing any more this morning. I have already sung so much—*too much*," added she, when the deputation had retired, so that the last words could be heard only by him for whom they were intended.

Though Miss Hauton's apologising thus for her conduct, and making a young gentleman, with whom she was but just acquainted, the judge of her actions, might be deemed a still farther proof of her indiscretion, yet the condescension was so flattering, and it appeared such an instance of ingenuous disposition, that Godfrey was sensibly touched by it. He followed the fair Maria to her ottoman, from which she banished Pompey the Great, to make room for him. The recollection of his father's warning words, however, came across Godfrey's mind; he bowed an answer to a motion that invited him to the dangerous seat, and continued standing with an air of safe respect.

"I hope you will have the goodness to express to Mrs Percy how much I felt her kindness to me last night, when—when I wanted it so much. There is something so soothing, so gentle, so indulgent about Mrs Percy, so *loveable!*"

"She is very good, very indulgent, indeed," said Godfrey, in a tone of strong affection—"very *loveable*—that is the exact word."

"I fear it is not English," said Miss Hauton.

"*Il mérite bien de l'être*," said Godfrey.

A profound silence ensued.—Colonel Hauton came up to this pair, while they were still silent, and with their eyes fixed upon the ground.

"D——d agreeable you two seem," cried the colonel.—"Buckhurst, you have always so much to say for yourself, do help your cousin here: I'm sure I know how to pity him, for many a time, the morning after a ball, I've been with my partner in just as bad a quandary—without a word to throw to a dog."

"Impossible, surely, colonel, when you had such a fine animal as this," said Godfrey, caressing Pompey, who lay at his feet. "Where did you get this handsome dog?"

The colonel then entered into the history of Pompey the Great. "I was speaking," said Miss Hauton, "to Mr Godfrey Percy of his family—relations of yours, Mr Falconer, are not they? He has another sister, I think, some one told me, a beautiful sister, Caroline, who was not at the ball last night?"

"Yes," said Buckhurst, who looked at this instant also to the dog for assistance—"Pompey!—Pompey!—poor fellow!"

"Is Miss Caroline Percy like her mother?"

"No."

"Like her father—or her brother?"

"Not particularly—Will you honour me with any commands for town?—Colonel, have you any?—I'm just going off with Major Clay," said Buckhurst.

"Not you, indeed," cried the colonel; "your father has made you over to me, and I won't give you leave of absence, my good fellow.—You're under orders for Cheltenham to-morrow, my boy.—— No reply, sir—no arguing with your commanding officer. You've no more to do, but to tell Clay to go without you."

"And now," continued the colonel, returning to Godfrey Percy, after Buckhurst had left the room, "what hinders you from making one of our party? You can't do better. There's Maria and Lady Old-

borough were both wishing it at breakfast—Maria, can't you say something?"

Maria's eyes said more than the colonel could have said, if he had spoken for ever.

"But, perhaps, Mr Godfrey Percy may have other engagements," said she, with a timid persuasive tone, which Godfrey found it extremely difficult to resist.

"Bellamy! where the d—l do you come from?—Very glad to see you, faith!" cried the colonel, going forward to shake hands with a very handsome man, who had just then entered the room. "Maria," said Colonel Hauton, turning to his sister, "don't you know Bellamy?—Bellamy," repeated he, coming close to her, whilst the gentleman was paying his compliments to Lady Oldborough, "Captain Bellamy, with whom you used to waltz every night, you know, at—what's the name of the woman's?"

"I never waltzed with him but once—or twice, that I remember," said Miss Hauton, "and then because you insisted upon it."

"I!—Well, I did very right if I did, because you were keeping all the world waiting, and I knew you intended to do it at last—so I thought you might as well do it at first. But I don't know what's the matter with you this morning—we must drive a little spirit into you at Cheltenham."

Captain Bellamy came up to pay his respects, or rather his compliments, to Miss Hauton: there was no respect in his manner, but the confidence of one who has been accustomed to be well received.

"She has not been well—fainted last night at a ball—is *hipped* this morning; but we'll get her spirits up again when we have her at Cheltenham—We shall be a famous dashing party! I have been beating up for recruits all day—here's one," said Colonel Hauton, turning to Godfrey Percy.

"Excuse me," said Godfrey, "I am engaged—I am obliged to join my regiment immediately." He bowed gravely to Miss Hauton—wished her a good morning; and, without trusting himself to another look, retreated, saying to himself—

"Sir, she's yours—You have brushed from the grape its soft blue;
From the rosebud you've shaken its tremulous dew:
What you've touched you may take.—Pretty waltzer, adieu!"

From this moment he mentioned Miss Hauton's name no more in his own family. His whole mind now seemed, and not only seemed, but was, full of military thoughts. So quickly in youth do different and opposite trains of ideas and emotions succeed to each other; and so easy it is, by a timely exercise of reason and self-command, to prevent a *fancy* from becoming a passion. Perhaps, if his own happiness alone had been in question, Godfrey might not have shown precisely the same prudence; but on this occasion his generosity and honour assisted his discretion. He plainly saw that Miss Hauton was not exactly a woman whom he could wish to make his wife—and he was too honourable to trifle with her affections. He was not such a coxcomb as to imagine that, in the course of so slight an acquaintance, he could have made any serious impression on this young lady's heart: yet he could not but perceive that she had distinguished him from the first hour he was introduced to her; and he was aware that, with her extreme sensibility, and an unoccupied imagination, she might rapidly form for him an attachment that might lead to mutual misery.

Mr Percy rejoiced in his son's honourable conduct, and he was particularly pleased by Godfrey's determining to join his regiment immediately. Mr Percy thought it advantageous for the eldest son of a man

of fortune to be absent for some years from his home, from his father's estate, tenants, and dependants, to see something of the world, to learn to estimate himself and others, and thus to have means of becoming a really respectable, enlightened, and useful country gentleman—not one of those booby squires, born only to consume the fruits of the earth, who spend their lives in coursing, shooting, hunting, carousing,* "who eat, drink, sleep, die, and rot in oblivion." He thought it in these times the duty of every young heir to serve a few years, that he might be as able, as willing, to join in the defence of his country, if necessary. Godfrey went, perhaps, beyond his father's ideas upon this subject, for he had an ardent desire to go into the army as a profession, and almost regretted that his being an eldest son might induce him to forego it after a few campaigns.

Godfrey did not enter into the army from the puerile vanity of wearing a red coat and an epaulette; nor to save himself the trouble of pursuing his studies; nor because he thought the army a *good lounge*, or a happy escape from parental control; nor yet did he consider the military profession as a mercenary speculation, in which he was to calculate the chance of getting *into the shoes*, or over the head, of Lieutenant A—— or Captain B——. He had higher objects; he had a noble ambition to distinguish himself. Not in mere technical phrase, or to grace a bumper toast, but in truth, and as a governing principle of action, he felt zeal for the interests of the service. Yet Godfrey was not without faults; and of these his parents, fond as they were of him, were well aware.

Mrs Percy, in particular, felt much anxiety, when the moment fixed for his departure approached; when

* See an eloquent address to country gentlemen, in Young's Annals of Agriculture, vol. i., last page.

she considered that he was now to mix with companions very different from those with whom he had hitherto associated, and to be placed in a situation where calmness of temper and prudence would be more requisite than military courage or generosity of disposition.

"Well, my dear mother," cried Godfrey, when he came to take leave, "fare you well: if I live, I hope I shall distinguish myself; and if I fall—

'How sleep the brave, who sink to rest!'"

"God bless you, my dear son!" said his mother. She seemed to have much more to say, but, unable at that moment to express it, she turned to her husband, who knew all she thought and felt.

"My dear Godfrey," said his father, "I have never troubled you with much advice; but now you are going from me, let me advise you to take care that the same enthusiasm which makes you think your own country the best country upon earth, your own family the best family in that country, and your own regiment the best regiment in the service, all which is becoming a good patriot, a good son, and a good soldier, should go a step—a dangerous step farther, and should degenerate into party spirit, or what the French call *esprit-de-corps*."

"The French!" cried Godfrey. "Oh! hang the French! Never mind what the French call it, sir."

"And degenerating into party spirit, or what is called *esprit-de-corps*," resumed Mr Percy, smiling, "should, in spite of your more enlarged views of the military art and science, and your knowledge of all that Alexander and Cæsar, and Marshals Saxe and Turenne, and the Duke of Marlborough and Lord Peterborough, ever said or did, persuade you to be-

lieve that your brother officers, whoever they may be, are the greatest men that ever existed, and that their opinions should rule the world, or at least should govern you."

"More than all the rest, I fear, my dear Godfrey," interposed Mrs Percy, "that, when you do not find the world so good as you imagine it to be, you will, by quarrelling with it directly, make it worse to you than it really is. But if you discover that merit is not always immediately rewarded or promoted, do not let your indignation, and—shall I say it—impatience of spirit, excite you to offend your superiors in station, and, by these means, retard your own advancement."

"Surely, if I should be treated with injustice, you would not have me bear it patiently?" cried Godfrey, turning quickly.

"In the first place, stay till it happens before you take fire," said his father; "and, in the next place, remember that patience, and deference to his superiors, form an indispensable part of a young soldier's merit."

"Ah! my dear," said Mrs Percy, looking up at her son anxiously, "if even at this instant, even with us, even at the bare imagination of injustice, you take offence, I fear—I very much fear——" said she, laying her hand upon his arm.

"My dearest mother," said Godfrey, in a softened tone, taking his mother's hand in the most respectful and tender manner, "fear nothing for me. I will be as patient as a lamb, rather than be a source of anxiety to you."

"And now, my good friends, fare ye well!" said Godfrey, turning to take leave of his sisters.

The young soldier departed. His last words, as he got upon his horse, were to Caroline. "Caroline, you will be married before I return."

But to descend to the common affairs of life. Whilst all these visits and balls, coquettings, and separations, had been going on, the Dutch carpenters had been repairing the wreck; and, from time to time, complaints had been made of them by Mr Percy's old steward. The careful steward's indignation was first excited by their forgetting every night to lock a certain gate, with the key of which they had been intrusted. Then they had wasted his master's timber, and various tools were missing—they had been twice as long as they ought to have been in finishing their work, and now, when the wind was fair, the whole ship's crew impatient to sail, and not above half a day's work wanting, the carpenters were smoking and drinking, instead of putting their hands to the business. The Dutch carpenter, who was at this moment more than half intoxicated, answered the steward's just reproaches with much insolence. Mr Percy, feeling that his hospitality and good-nature were encroached upon and abused, declared that he would no longer permit the Dutchmen to have the use of his house, and ordered his steward to see that they quitted it immediately.

These men, and all belonging to them, consequently left the place in a few hours; whatever remained to be done to the vessel was finished that evening, and she sailed, to the great joy of her whole crew, and of Mr Percy's steward, who, when he brought the news of this event to his master, protested that he was as glad as if anybody had given him twenty golden guineas, that he had at last got safely rid of these ill-mannered drunken fellows, who, after all his master had done for them, never so much as said "thank you," and who had wasted and spoiled more by their carelessness than their heads were worth.

Alas! he little knew at that moment how much

more his master was to lose by their carelessness, and he rejoiced too soon at having got *rid* of them.

In the middle of the night the family were alarmed by the cry of fire!—A fire had broken out in the out-house, which had been lent to the Dutchmen; before it was discovered, the roof was in a blaze; the wind unfortunately blew towards a hay-rick, which was soon in flames, and the burning hay spread the fire to a considerable distance, till it caught the veranda at the east wing of the dwelling-house. One of the servants, who slept in that part of the house, was awakened by the light from the burning veranda, but by the time the alarm was given, and before the family could get out of their rooms, the flames had reached Mr Percy's study, which contained his most valuable papers. Mr Percy, whose voice all his family, in the midst of their terror and confusion, obeyed, directed with great presence of mind what should be done by each. He sent one to open a cistern of water at the top of the house, and to let it flow over the roof, another to tear down the trellis next the part that was on fire; others he despatched for barrows-full of wet mortar from a heap which was in a back yard near the house; others he stationed in readiness to throw the mortar where it was most needful to extinguish the flames, or to prevent their communicating with the rest of the building. He went himself to the place where the fire raged with the greatest violence, whilst his wife and daughters were giving out from the study the valuable papers, which, as he directed, were thrown in one heap on the lawn, at a sufficient distance from the house to prevent any danger of their being burnt—most of them were in tin cases that were easily removed—the loose papers and books were put into baskets, and covered with wet blankets, so that the pieces of the

burning trellis, which fell upon them as they were carried out, did them no injury. It was wonderful with what silence, order, and despatch, this went on, whilst three females, instead of shrieking and fainting, combined to do what was useful and prudent. In spite of all Mr Percy's exertions, however, the flames burst in from the burning trellis through one of the windows of the study, before the men could tear down the shutters and architraves, as he had ordered. The fire caught the wood-work, and ran along the book-shelves on one side of the wall with terrible rapidity, so that the whole room was, in a few minutes, in a blaze—they were forced to leave it before they had carried out many of the books. Some old papers remained in the presses, supposed to be duplicates, and of no consequence. This whole wing of the house they were obliged to abandon to the flames, but the fire was stopped in its progress at last, and the principal part of the mansion was preserved by wet mortar, according to Mr Percy's judicious order, by the prompt obedience, and by the unanimity, of all who assisted.

The next morning the family saw the melancholy spectacle of a heap of ruins in the place of that library which they all loved so much. However, it was their disposition to make the best of misfortunes; instead of deploring what they had lost, they rejoiced in having suffered so little and saved so much. They particularly rejoiced that no lives had been sacrificed; —Mr Percy declared, that for his own part, he would willingly undergo much greater pecuniary loss, to have had the satisfaction of seeing in all his family so much presence of mind, and so much freedom from selfishness, as they had shown upon this occasion.

When he said something of this sort, before his servants, who were all assembled, it was observed that

one of them, a very old nurse, looked immediately at Caroline, then lifted up her hands and eyes to heaven, in silent gratitude. Upon inquiry it appeared, that in the confusion and terror, when the alarm had first been raised, the nurse had been forgotten, or it had been taken for granted that she had gone home to her own cottage the preceding evening.

Caroline, however, recollected her, and ran to her room, which was in the attic story over the library.

When Caroline opened the door she could scarcely see the bed.—She made her way to it, however, got old Martha out of the room, and with great difficulty brought the bewildered, decrepit creature safely down a small staircase, which the flames had not then reached.—Nothing could exceed her gratitude; with eyes streaming with tears, and a head shaking with strong emotion, she delighted in relating all these circumstances, and declared that none but Miss Caroline could have persuaded her to go down that staircase, when she saw all below in flames.

Mr Percy's first care was to look over his papers, to see whether any were missing.—To his consternation, one valuable deed, a deed by which he held the whole Percy estate, was nowhere to be found. He had particular reason for being alarmed by the loss of this paper.—The heir-at-law to this estate had long been lying in wait to make an attack upon him.—Aware of this, Mr Percy took all prudent means to conceal the loss of this paper, and he cautioned his whole family never to mention it.

It happened about this time, that a poor old man, to whom Buckhurst Falconer had given that puppy which his brother John had so bitterly regretted, came to Mr Percy to complain that the dog had brought him into great trouble. The puppy had grown into a dog, and of this the old man had forgotten to give

notice to the tax-gatherer. Mr Percy perceiving clearly that the man had no design to defraud, and pitying him for having thus, by his ignorance or carelessness, subjected himself to the heavy penalty of ten pounds, which, without selling his only cow, he was unable to pay, advised him to state the simple fact in a petition, and Mr Percy promised to transmit this petition to Government, with a memorial against the tax-gatherer, who had been accused, in many instances, of oppressive and corrupt conduct. He had hitherto defied all complainants, because he was armed strong in law by an attorney who was his near relation—an attorney of the name of Sharpe, whose cunning and skill in the doubles and mazes of his profession, and whose active and vindictive temper, had rendered him the terror of the neighbourhood. Not only the poor but the rich feared him, for he never failed to devise means of revenging himself wherever he was offended. He one morning waited on Mr Percy, to speak to him about the memorial, which, he understood, Mr Percy was drawing up against Mr Bates, the tax-gatherer.

"Perhaps, Mr Percy," said he, "you don't know that Mr Bates is my near relation?"

Mr Percy replied, that he had not known it; but that now that he did, he could not perceive how that altered the business; as he interfered, not from any private motive, but from a sense of public justice, which made him desire to remove a person from a situation for which he had shown himself utterly unfit.

Mr Sharpe smiled a malicious smile, and declared that, for his part, he did not pretend to be a reformer of abuses: he thought, in the present times, that gentlemen who wished well to their king and the peace of the country ought not to be forward to lend their names to popular discontents, and should not em-

barrass Government with petty complaints. Gentlemen could never foresee where such things would end, and therefore, in the *existing circumstances*, they ought surely to endeavour to strengthen, instead of weakening, the hands of Government.

To this commonplace *cant*, by which all sorts of corruption and all public delinquents might be screened, and by which selfishness and fraud hope to pass for loyalty and love of the peace of the country, Mr Percy did not attempt, or rather did not deign any reply.

Mr Sharpe then insinuated, that Lord Oldborough, who had put Bates into his present situation, would be displeased by a complaint against him. Mr Sharpe observed, that Lord Oldborough was remarkable for standing steadily by all the persons whom he appointed, and that, if Mr Percy persisted in this attack, he would probably not find himself thanked by his own relations, the Falconers.

This hint produced no effect: so at last Mr Sharpe concluded by saying, with an air of prodigious legal assurance, that for his own part he was quite at ease about the result of the affair, for he was confident that, when the matter came to be properly inquired into, and the witnesses to be cross-examined, no malpractices could be brought home to his relation.

Then Mr Percy observed, that a memorial, praying to have the circumstances inquired into, could be no disadvantage to Mr Bates, but the contrary, as it would tend to prove his innocence publicly, and to remove the prejudice which now subsisted against him. —Mr Percy, who had the memorial at this time in his hand, deliberately folded it up, and directed it.

"Then, sir," cried Mr Sharpe, put off his guard by anger, "since you are determined to throw away the scabbard, you cannot be surprised if I do the same."

Mr Percy, smiling, said that he feared no sword but the sword of justice, which could not fall on his head, while he was doing what was just. As he spoke, he prepared to seal the memorial.

Mr Sharpe's habitual caution recurring in the space of a second or two, he begged pardon if zeal for his relation had hurried him into any unbecoming warmth of expression, and stretching out his hand eagerly to stop Mr Percy, as he was going to press down the seal, "Give me leave, sir," said he, "give me leave to run my eye over that memorial—may I beg, before you seal it."

"And welcome," said Mr Percy, putting the paper into his hand: "all that I do shall be done openly and fairly."

The attorney took possession of the memorial, and began to con it over. As he was reading it, he happened to stand in a recessed window, so that he could not easily be seen by any person who entered the room: at this moment Rosamond came in suddenly, exclaiming, as she held up a huge unfolded parchment, "I've found it!—I've found it, my dear father!—I do believe this is Sir John Percy's deed that was lost!—I always said it was not burned——What's the matter?—What do you mean?—Nobody can hear me? the outer door is shut——Perhaps this is only a copy.—It is not signed or sealed, but I suppose——"

Here she stopped short, for she saw Mr Sharpe ——She looked so much astounded, that even if he had not heard all she had said, her countenance would have excited his curiosity. The attorney had heard every syllable she had uttered, and he knew enough of Mr Percy's affairs to comprehend the full extent of the advantage that might be made of this discovery. He coolly returned the memorial,

acknowledging that it was drawn up with much moderation and ability, but regretting that Mr Percy should think it necessary to send it; and concluding with a few general expressions of the regard he had always felt for the family, he took his leave.

"All is safe!" cried Rosamond, as soon as she heard the house door shut after he was gone. "All it safe, thank Heaven!—for that man's head was luckily so full of this memorial, that he never heard one word I said."

Mr Percy was of a different opinion: he was persuaded that the attorney would not neglect so fine an opportunity of revenge. Sharpe had formerly been employed in suits of Sir Robert Percy, the heir-at-law. Here was now the promise of a lawsuit, that would at all events put a great deal of money into the pockets of the lawyers, and a considerable gratuity would be ensured to the person who should first inform Sir Robert of the loss of the important conveyance.

Mr Percy's opinion of the revengeful nature of Sharpe, and his perception that he was in the solicitor's power, did not, however, make any change in his resolution about the memorial.—It was sent, and Bates was turned out of his office. For some time nothing more was heard of Mr Sharpe.—Mr Percy, for many months afterward, was busied in rebuilding that part of his house which had been destroyed by the fire; and as he was naturally of a sanguine temper, little inclined to occupy himself with cabals and quarrels, the transaction concerning Bates, and even the attorney's threat of throwing away the scabbard, passed from his mind. The family pursued the happy tenor of their lives, without remembering that there was such a being as Mr solicitor Sharpe.

Chapter vi.

AT the time of the fire at Percy Hall, a painted glass window in the passage—we should say the gallery—leading to the study, had been destroyed.—Old Martha, whose life Caroline had saved, had a son, who possessed some talents as a painter, and who had learnt the art of painting on glass. He had been early in his life assisted by the Percy family, and, desirous to offer some small testimony of his gratitude, he begged permission to paint a new window for the gallery.—He chose for his subject the fire, and the moment when Caroline was assisting his decrepit mother down the dangerous staircase.—The painting was finished unknown to Caroline, and put up on her birthday, when she had just attained her eighteenth year. This was the only circumstance worth recording which the biographer can find noted in the family annals at this period. In this dearth of events, may we take the liberty of introducing, according to the fashion of modern biography, a few private letters? They are written by persons of whom the reader as yet knows nothing—Mr Percy's second and third sons, Alfred and Erasmus. Alfred was a barrister; Erasmus a physician: they were both at this time in London, just commencing their professional career. Their characters——but let their characters speak for themselves in their letters, else neither their letters nor their characters can be worth attention.

ALFRED PERCY TO HIS FATHER.

"My dear Father,

"Thank you for the books—I have been reading hard lately, for I have still, alas! leisure enough to read. I cannot expect to be employed, or to have

fees for some time to come. I am armed with patience —I am told that I have got through the worst part of my profession, the reading of dry law. This is tiresome enough, to be sure: but I think the courting of attorneys and solicitors is the worst part of the beginning of my profession: for this I was not, and I believe I never shall be, sufficiently prepared. I give them no dinners, and they neglect me; yet I hope I pay them proper attention. To make amends, however, I have been so fortunate as to form acquaintance with some gentlemen of the bar, who possess enlarged minds and general knowledge: their conversation is of the greatest use and pleasure to me. But many barristers here are men who live entirely among themselves, with their heads in their green bags, and their souls narrowed to a point: mere machines for drawing pleas and rejoinders.

"I remember Burke asserts (and I was once, with true professional parry-spirit, angry with him for the assertion) that the study of the law has a contractile power on the mind: I am now convinced it has, from what I see, and what I feel; therefore I will do all I can to counteract this contraction by the expansive force of literature. I lose no opportunity of making acquaintance with literary men, and cultivating their society. The other day, at Hookham's library, I met with a man of considerable talents—a Mr Temple; he was looking for a passage in the life of the Lord Keeper Guildford, which I happened to know. This brought us into a conversation, with which we were mutually so well pleased, that we agreed to dine together, for farther information—and we soon knew all that was to be known of each other's history.

"Temple is of a very good family, though the younger son of a younger brother. He was brought up by his grandfather, with whom he was a favourite.

Accustomed, from his childhood, to live with the rich and great, to see a grand establishment, to be waited upon, to have servants, horses, carriages at his command, and always to consider himself as a part of a family who possessed everything they could wish for in life; he says, he almost forgot, or rather never thought of the time when he was to have nothing, and when he should be obliged to provide entirely for himself. Fortunately for him, his grandfather having early discerned that he had considerable talents, determined that he should have all the advantages of education, which he thought would prepare him to shine in Parliament.—His grandfather, however, died when Temple was yet scarcely eighteen.—He had put off writing a codicil to his will, by which Temple lost the provision intended for him.—All hopes of being brought into Parliament were over. His uncle, who succeeded to the estate, had sons of his own. There were family jealousies, and young Temple, as having been a favourite, was disliked.—Promises were made by other relations, and by former friends, and by these he was amused and misled for some time; but he found he was only wasting his life, attending upon these great relations. The unkindness and falsehood of some, and the haughty neglect of others, hurt his high spirit, and roused his strong indignation. He, in his turn, neglected and offended, was cast off at last, or forgotten by most of the fine promisers.—At which, he says, he has had reason to rejoice, for this threw him upon his own resources, and made him exert his own mind.—He applied, in earnest, to prepare himself for the profession for which he was best fitted, and went to the bar.—Now comes the part of his history for which he, with reason, blames himself. He was disgusted, not so much by the labour, as by the many disagreeable

circumstances, which necessarily occur in the beginning of a barrister's course.—He could not bear the waiting in the courts, or on circuit, without business, without notice. He thought his merit would never make its way, and was provoked by seeing two or three stupid fellows pushed on by solicitors, or helped up by judges.—He had so much knowledge, talent, and eloquence, that he must in time have made a great figure, and would, undoubtedly, have risen to the first dignities, had he persevered; but he sacrificed himself to pique and impatience. He quitted the bar, and the very summer after he had left it, the illness of a senior counsel on that circuit afforded an opportunity where Temple would have been called upon, and where he could fully have displayed his talents. Once known, such a man would have been always distinguished.—He now bitterly regrets that he abandoned his profession.—This imprudence gave his friends a fair excuse for casting him off; but, he says, their neglect grieves him not, for he had resolved never more to trust to their promises, or to stoop to apply to them for patronage. He has been these last two years in an obscure garret writing for bread. He says, however, that he is sure he is happier, even in this situation, than are some of his cousins at this instant, who are struggling in poverty to be genteel, or to keep up a family name, and he would not change places with those who are in a state of idle and opprobrious dependence. I understand (remember, this is a secret between ourselves)—I understand that *secretary* Cunningham Falconer has found him out, and makes *good use of his pen*, but pays him shabbily. Temple is too much of a man of honour to *peach*. So Lord Oldborough knows nothing of the matter; and Cunningham gets half his business done, and supplies all his deficiencies, by means of this poor drudging genius.

Perhaps I have tired you with this history of my new friend; but he has interested me extremely:—he has faults certainly, perhaps too high a spirit, too much sensibility; but he has such strict integrity, so much generosity of mind, and something so engaging in his manners, that I cannot help loving, admiring, and pitying him—that last sentiment, however, I am obliged to conceal, for he would not bear it.

"I see very little of Erasmus. He has been in the country this fortnight with some patient. I long for his return.—I will make the inquiries you desire about Buckhurst Falconer.

"Your affectionate son,
"Alfred Percy.

"P.S.—Yes, my dear Rosamond, I *shall* be obliged to you for the flower-roots for my landlady's daughter."

LETTER FROM ERASMUS TO HIS FATHER.

"My dear Father,

"Pray do not feel disappointed when I tell you that I am not getting on quite so fast as I expected. I assure you, however, that I have not neglected any honourable means of bringing myself into notice. But it is very difficult for a young man to rise without puffing, or using low means.

"I met Lady Jane Granville a few days ago. She gave me a note to Sir Amyas Courtney, a fashionable physician and a great favourite of hers.—She told me that he had formerly been acquainted with some of my family, and she so strongly urged me to wait upon him, that to avoid offending her ladyship, I promised to avail myself of her introduction.

"I called several times before I found Sir Amyas at home. At last, by appointment, I went to break-

fast with him one morning when he was confined to the house by an *influenza*. He received me in the most courteous manner—recollected to have danced with my mother years ago, at a ball at Lord Somebody's—professed the greatest respect for the name of Percy—asked me various questions about my grandfather, which I could not answer, and paid you more compliments than I can remember. Sir Amyas is certainly the prettiest behaved physician breathing, with the sweetest assortment of tittle-tattle, with an inexhaustible fund of anecdotes and compliments for the great, and an intimate acquaintance with the fair and fashionable. He has also the happiest art of speaking a vast deal, and yet saying nothing; seeming to give an opinion, without ever committing himself.—The address with which he avoids contested points of science, and the art with which he displays his superficial knowledge, and conceals his want of depth, is truly amusing. He slid away from science as soon as he could, to politics, where he kept safe in commonplace newspaper-phrases; and in the happy persuasion that everything is for the best, and that every man in power, let him be of what party he may, can do no wrong. He did not seem quite satisfied with my countenance as he spoke, and once or twice paused for my acquiescence—in vain.

"We were interrupted by the entrance of a Mr Gresham, a rich merchant, who came to look at a picture which Sir Amyas shows as a true Titian. Mr Gresham spoke, as I thought, with much good sense and taste about it, and Sir Amyas talked a great deal of amateur nonsense. Still in the same namby-pamby style, and with the same soft voice and sweet smile, Sir Amyas talked on of pictures and of battles, and carnage and levees, and drawing-rooms and balls, and butterflies.—He has a museum for the ladies, and he

took me to look at it—Sad was the hour and luckless was the day!—Among his shells was one upon which he peculiarly prided himself, and which he showed me as an unique. I was, I assure you, prudently silent till he pressed for my opinion, and then I could not avoid confessing that I suspected it to be a *made*-shell—*made*, Caroline knows how, by the application of acids. The countenance of Sir Amyas clouded over, and I saw that I at this moment lost all chance of his future favour. He made me some fine speeches, when I was going away, and dwelt upon his great desire to oblige any friend of Lady Jane Granville's.

"A few days afterwards I saw her ladyship again, and found, by her manner, that she had not been satisfied by Sir Amyas Courtney's report of me. She pressed me to tell her all that had passed between us. She was provoked by my imprudence, as she called it, about the shell, and exhorted me to repair it by future attentions and complaisance. When I declined paying court to Sir Amyas, as inconsistent with my ideas and feelings of independence, her ladyship grew angry—said that my father had inspired all his sons with absurd notions of independence, which would prevent their rising in the world, or succeeding in any profession. I believe I then grew warm in defence of my father and myself. The conclusion of the whole was, that we remained of our own opinions, and that her ladyship protested she would never more attempt to serve us. Alfred has called since on Lady Jane, but has not been admitted. I am sorry that I too have offended her, for I really like her, and am grateful for her kindness, but I cannot court her patronage, nor bend to her idol, Sir Amyas.—

* * * * *

"Your affectionate son,
"Erasmus Percy."

LETTER FROM ERASMUS PERCY TO HIS FATHER.

"My dear Father,

"I told you in my last how I lost all hopes of favour from Sir Amyas Courtney, and how determined I was not to bend to him.—On some occasion soon afterwards this determination appeared, and recommended me immediately to the notice of a certain Dr Frumpton, who is the antagonist and sworn foe to Sir Amyas.—Do you know who Dr Frumpton is—and who he was—and how he has risen to his present height?

"He was a farrier in a remote county; he began by persuading the country people in his neighbourhood that he had a specific for the bite of a mad dog.

"It happened that he cured an old dowager's favourite waiting-maid, who had been bitten by a cross lap-dog, which her servants pronounced to be mad, that they might have an excuse for hanging it.

"The fame of this cure was spread by the dowager among her numerous acquaintance in town and country.

"Then he took agues — and afterwards scrofula under his protection; patronised by his old dowager— and lucky in some of his desperate quackery, Dr Frumpton's reputation rapidly increased, and from different counties fools came to consult him. His manners were bearish even to persons of quality who resorted to his den; but these brutal manners *imposed* upon many, heightened the idea of his confidence in himself, and commanded the submission of the timid. —His tone grew higher and higher, and he more and more easily bullied the credulity of man- and woman-kind.—It seems that either extreme of soft and polished, or of rough and brutal manner, can succeed with certain physicians.—*Dr* Frumpton's name, and Dr Frumpton's wonderful cures, were in every newspaper, and

in every shop-window. No man ever puffed himself better even in this puffing age.—His success was viewed with scornful yet with jealous eyes by the regular bred physicians, and they did all they could to keep him down—Sir Aymas Courtney in particular, who would never call him anything but *that farrier*, making what noise he could about Frumpton's practising without a diploma. In pure spite, Frumpton took to learning—late as it was, he put himself to school—with virulent zeal he read and *crammed* till, Heaven knows how! he accomplished getting a diploma—stood all prescribed examinations, and has grinned defiance ever since at Sir Amyas.

"Frumpton, delighted with the story of the *made shell*, and conceiving me to be the enemy of his enemy, resolved, as he declared, to take me by the hand; and, such is the magical deception of self-love, that his apparent friendliness towards me made him appear quite agreeable, and notwithstanding all that I had heard and known of him, I fancied his brutality was frankness, and his presumption strength of character.—I gave him credit especially for a happy instinct for true merit, and an honourable antipathy to flattery and meanness.—The manner in which he pronounced the words, *fawning puppy!* applied to Sir Amyas Courtney, pleased me peculiarly—and I had just exalted Frumpton into a great man, and an original genius, when he fell flat to the level, and below the level of common mortals.

"It happened, as I was walking home with him, we were stopped in the street by a crowd, which had gathered round a poor man, who had fallen from a scaffold, and had broken his leg. Dr Frumpton immediately said, 'Send for Bland, the surgeon, who lives at the corner of the street.' The poor man was carried into a shop; we followed him. I found that

his leg, besides being broken, was terribly bruised and cut. The surgeon in a few minutes arrived. Mr Bland, it seems, is a *protégé* of Frumpton's, who formerly practised human farriery under him.

"Mr Bland, after slightly looking at it, said, 'The leg must come off, the sooner the better.' The man, perceiving that I pitied him, cast such a beseeching look at me, as made me interpose, impertinently perhaps, but I could not resist it. I forget what I said; but I know the sense of it was, that I thought the poor fellow's leg could and ought to be saved.—I remember Dr Frumpton glared upon me instantly with eyes of fury, and asked how I dared to interfere in a surgical case; and to contradict his friend, Mr Bland, a surgeon?

"They prepared for the operation—the surgeon whipped on his mittens—the poor man, who was almost fainting with loss of blood, cast another piteous look at me, and said, in an Irish accent, 'Long life to you, dear!—and don't let'm—for what will I be without a leg? And my wife and children!'

"He fell back in a swoon, and I sprung between the surgeon and him; insisting that, as he had appealed to me, he should be left to me; and declared that I would have him carried to St George's Hospital, where I knew he would be taken care of properly.

"Frumpton stamped, and scarcely articulate with rage, bade me—'Stir the man at your peril!' adding expressions injurious to the hospital, with the governors of which he had some quarrel. I made a sign to the workmen who had brought in the wounded man; they lifted him instantly, and carried him out before me; and one of them, being his countryman, followed, crying aloud, '*Success* to your honour! and may you *never* want a *friend!*'

"Frumpton seized him by both shoulders, and push-

ing him out of the house, exclaimed, 'Success, by G—, he shall never have, if I can help it! He has lost a friend such as he can never get again.—By G—, I'll make him repent this!'

"Unmoved by these denunciations, I pursued my way to the hospital. You know in what an admirable manner the London hospitals are conducted.—At St George's this poor man was received, and attended with the greatest care and skill. The surgeon who has taken charge of him assures me that his leg will, a month hence, be as useful as any leg in London.

"Dr Frumpton and Mr Bland have, I find, loudly complained of my interference, as contrary to all medical etiquette——*Etiquette!*—from Frumpton!—The story has been told with many exaggerations, and always to my disadvantage.—I cannot, however, repent.—Let me lose what I may, I am satisfied with the pleasure of seeing the poor man in a way to do well. Pray let me hear from you, my dear father, and say, if you can, that you think me right.—Thank Caroline for her letter. * * * * * *

"Your affectionate
"Erasmus Percy."

LETTER FROM ALFRED.

"My dear Father,—I have made all possible inquiries about Buckhurst Falconer. He staid at Cheltenham till about a month ago with the Hautons, and I hear attended Miss Hauton everywhere: but I do not think there is any reason to believe the report of his paying his addresses to her. The public attention he showed her was, in my opinion, designed only to pique Caroline, whom, I'm persuaded, he thinks (between the fits of half-a-dozen other fancies) the first

of women—as he always calls her. Rosamond need not waste much pity on him. He is an out-of-sight, out-of-mind man. The pleasure of the present moment is all in all with him.—He has many good points in his disposition; but Caroline had penetration enough to see that his character would never suit hers; and I rejoice that she gave him a decided refusal.

"Since he came to town, he has, by his convivial powers, his good stories, good songs, and knack of mimicry, made himself so *famous*, that he has more invitations to dinner than he can accept. He has wit and talents fit for more than being the buffoon or mocking-bird of a good dinner and a pleasant party; but he seems so well contented with this *réputation de salon*, that I am afraid his ambition will not rise to anything higher. After leading this idle life, and enjoying this cheap-earned praise, he will never submit to the seclusion and application necessary for the attainment of the great prizes of professional excellence. I doubt whether he will even persevere so far as to be called to the bar; though the other day when I met him in Bond Street, he assured me, and bid me assure you, that he is getting on *famously*, and eating his terms with a prodigious appetite. He seemed heartily glad to see me, and expressed warm gratitude for your having saved his conscience, and having prevented his father from forcing him, as he said, to be a disgrace to the Church.

"Rosamond asks what sort of girls the Miss Falconers are, and whether the Falconers have been civil to me since I settled in town?—Yes; pretty well. The girls are mere *show* girls—like a myriad of others—sing, play, dance, dress, flirt, and *all that*. Georgiana is *beautiful sometimes;* Arabella *ugly always*. I don't like either of them, and they don't like me, for I am not an eldest son. The mother was prodigiously

pleased with me at first, because she mistook me for Godfrey, or rather she mistook me for the heir of our branch of the Percys. I hear that Mrs Falconer has infinite address, both as a political and a hymeneal *intrigante:* but I have not time to study her. All together, the family, though they live in constant gaiety, do not give me the idea of being happy among one another. I have no particular reason for saying this. I judge only from the tact on this subject which I have acquired from my own happy experience.

"Love to Rosamond—I am afraid she will think I have been too severe upon Buckhurst Falconer. I know he is a favourite, at least a *protégé* of hers and of Godfrey. Bid her remember I have acknowledged that he has talents and generosity; but that which interests Rosamond in his favour inclines ill-natured me against him—his being one of Caroline's suitors. I think he has great assurance to continue, in spite of all repulse, to hope, especially as he does nothing to render himself more worthy of encouragement. Thank Caroline for her letter; and assure Rosamond, that, though I have never noticed it, I was grateful for her entertaining account of M. de Tourville's *vis:* I confess, I am rather late with my acknowledgments; but the fire at Percy Hall, and many events which rapidly succeeded, put that whole affair out of my head. Moreover, the story of Euphrosyne and Count Albert was so squeezed under the seal, that I must beg notes of explanation in her next. Who the deuce is Euphrosyne? and what does the letter P—for the rest of the word was torn out—stand for? and is Count Albert a hero in a novel, or a real live man?

"I saw a live man yesterday, whom I did not at all like to see—Sharpe, walking with our *good* cousin, Sir Robert Percy, in close conversation. This con-

junction, I fear, bodes us no good.—Pray do, pray make another search for *the deed.*

"Your affectionate son,

"Alfred Percy."

Soon after this letter had been received, and while the picture of his life, and the portraits of his worthy companions were yet fresh in her view, Buckhurst Falconer took the unhappy moment to write to renew his declaration of passionate attachment to Caroline, and to beg to be permitted to wait upon her once more.

From the indignant blush which mounted in Caroline's face on reading his letter, Rosamond saw how unlikely it was that his request should be granted. It came, indeed, at an unlucky time. Rosamond could not refrain from a few words of apology, and looks of commiseration for Buckhurst; yet she entirely approved of Caroline's answer to his letter, and the steady repetition of her refusal, and even of the strengthened terms in which it was now expressed. Rosamond was always prudent for her friends, when it came to any serious point where their interests or happiness were concerned. Her affection for her friends, and her fear of doing wrong on such occasions, awakened her judgment, and so controlled her imagination, that she then proved herself uncommonly judicious and discreet.—Prudence had not, it is true, been a part of Rosamond's character in childhood; but, in the course of her education, a considerable portion of it had been infused by a very careful and skilful hand. Perhaps it had never completely assimilated with the original composition: sometimes the prudence fell to the bottom, sometimes was shaken to the top, according to the agitation or tranquillity of her mind; sometimes it was so faintly visible, that its

existence might be doubted by the hasty observer; but when put to a proper test, it never failed to reappear in full force.——After any effort of discretion in conduct, Rosamond, however, often relieved and amused herself by talking in favour of the imprudent side of the question.

"You have decided prudently, my dear Caroline, I acknowledge," said she. "But now your letter is fairly gone; now that it is all over, and that we are safe, I begin to think you are a little too prudent for your age.—Bless me, Caroline, if you are so prudent at eighteen, what will you be at thirty? Beware!—and in the meantime you will never be a heroine—what a stupid uninteresting heroine you will make! You will never get into any *entanglements*, never have any adventures; or if kind fate should, propitious to my prayer, bring you into some charming difficulties, even then we could not tremble for you, or enjoy all the luxury of pity, because we should always know that you would be so well able to extricate yourself—so certain to conquer, or—not die—but endure.——Recollect that Doctor Johnson, when his learned sock was off, confessed that he could never be thoroughly interested for Clarissa, because he knew that her prudence would always be equal to every occasion."

Mrs Percy began to question whether Johnson had ever expressed this sentiment seriously: she reprobated the cruelty of *friendly* biographers, who publish every light expression that escapes from celebrated lips in private conversation; she was going to have added a word or two about the injury done to the public, to young people especially, by the spreading such rash dogmas under the sanction of a great name.

But Rosamond did not give her mother time to enforce this moral; she went on rapidly with her own thoughts.

"Caroline, my dear," continued she, "you shall not be my heroine; you are too well proportioned for a heroine—in mind, I mean: a heroine may—*must* have a finely-proportioned person, but never a well-proportioned mind. All her virtues must be larger than the life; all her passions those of a tragedy queen. Produce—only dare to produce—one of your reasonable wives, mothers, daughters, or sisters on the theatre, and you would see them hissed off the stage. Good people are acknowledged to be the bane of the drama and the novel—I never wish to see a reasonable woman on the stage, or an unreasonable woman off it. I have the greatest sympathy and admiration for your true heroine in a book; but I grant you, that in real life, in a private room, the tragedy queen would be too much for me; and the novel heroine would be the most useless, troublesome, affected, haranguing, egotistical, insufferable being imaginable! So, my dear Caroline, I am content, that you are my sister, and my friend, though I give you up as a heroine."

Chapter viij.

LETTER FROM GODFREY PERCY TO MRS PERCY.

"London, the British Hotel.

"YOU will be surprised, my dear mother, to find that I am in London, instead of being, as I had hoped I should have been by this time, with the army on the Continent. Just as we were going to embark, we were countermanded, and ordered to stay at our quarters. Conceive our disappointment—to remain in garrison at the most stupid, idle country town in England.

"You ask how I like my brother officers, and what sort of men they are?—Major Gascoigne, son to my father's friend, I like extremely; he is a man of a liberal spirit, much information, and zeal for the army. But what I particularly admire in him is his candour. He says it is his own fault that he is not higher in the army—that when he was a very young man, he was of too unbending a temper—mistook bluntness for sincerity—did not treat his superior officer with proper deference—lost a good friend by it.

"A fine lesson for me! and the better, because not intended.

"Next to Gascoigne I like Captain Henry: a young man of my own age, uncommonly handsome, but quite free from conceit. There is something in his manners so gentlemanlike, and he is of so frank a disposition, that I was immediately prepossessed in his favour.—I don't like him the worse for having a tinge of proper pride, especially in the circumstances in which he is placed. I understand that it is suspected he is not of a good family; but I am not impertinent enough to inquire into particulars. I have been told, that when he first came into the regiment, some of the officers wanted to make out what family he belongs to, and whether he is, or is not, one of the Irish Henrys. They showed their curiosity in an unwarrantable manner; and Henry, who has great feeling, and a spirit as quick to resent injury as to be won by kindness, was going to call one of these gentlemen to account for their impertinence. He would have had half-a-dozen duels upon his hands, if Gascoigne had not settled them. I have not time to tell you the whole story—but it is enough to say, that Major Gascoigne showed great address and prudence, as well as steadiness, and you

would all love Captain Henry for his gratitude—he thinks Gascoigne a demigod.

"The rest of my brother-officers are nothing supernatural—just what you may call mere red-coats; some of them fond of high play, others fond of drinking: so I have formed no intimacy but with Gascoigne and Henry. My father will see that I do not *yet* think that the officers of my own mess must all be the first men in the universe.

"Love to all at home. I hope we shall sail soon, and I hope Rosamond will give me credit for the length of this letter.—She cannot say, with all her malice, that my lines are at *hooting distance*, or that my words are stretched out like a lawyer's—two good pages, count which way you will!—and from Godfrey, who is not a letter-writer, as Alfred is!—Two good pages, did I say? why, here's the best part of a third for you, if you allow me to be,

"My dear mother,
with much respect,
Your dutiful, obedient,
and affectionate son,
GODFREY PERCY."

Whilst Godfrey remained in quarters at this most idle and stupid of country towns, some circumstances occurred in the regiment which put his prudence to trial, and, sooner than he expected, called upon him for the exercise of that spirit of forbearance and temper which he had promised his mother he would show.—It was the more difficult to him to keep his temper, because it was an affair which touched the interest of his friend, Major Gascoigne. The lieutenant-colonel of the regiment having been promoted, Major Gascoigne had reasonable expectations of succeeding him; but, to his disappointment, a younger

man than himself, and a stranger to the regiment, was put over his head. It was said that this appointment was made in consequence of the new colonel being a nephew of Lord Skreene, and of his also having it in his power to command two votes in Parliament.

For the truth of this story we cannot pretend to vouch. But the credit the report gained in the regiment created great discontents, which the behaviour of the new lieutenant-colonel unfortunately was not calculated to dissipate.—He certainly did not bear his honours meekly, but, on the contrary, give himself airs of authority, and played the martinet to a useless and ridiculous degree. This, from a mere *parade officer*, who had never been out of London, to a man like the major—who had seen service and could show wounds—was, to use the mildest expression, ill-judged. Captain Henry said it was *intolerable*—and Godfrey thought so.

Every parade day something unpleasant occurred, and, when it was talked over, some of the officers took part with Gascoigne, and some with the lieutenant-colonel—very few, however, with the latter—only those who wanted to *keep in* favour: officers in quarters, as these were, had not much to do; therefore they had the more time for disputes, which became of more and more consequence every hour. Major Gascoigne behaved incomparably well, never failing in respect towards his superior officer when he was present, and when he was absent doing all that was possible to restrain the imprudent zeal and indignation of his young friends.

One day, when Godfrey, Captain Henry, and Major Gascoigne, were together, the major actually knelt down to Henry, to prevail upon him to give up a mad design of challenging his colonel.

That very day, not an hour afterwards, the lieutenant-colonel took occasion to thwart the major about some circumstance of no consequence. Godfrey's blood boiled in his veins—his promise to his mother, that he would be as gentle as a lamb, he recollected at this instant—with difficulty he restrained himself —still his blood boiled. Major Gascoigne's fear that Godfrey and Henry should embroil themselves for his sake increased, for he saw what passed in their hearts, and he had no peace of mind by day, or rest by night.

Generous people are, of all others, the most touched by generosity, either of feeling or action. In this state of irritation, it was not possible that things should long go on without coming to a crisis. Major Gascoigne proposed, as the measure that would be most likely to restore and preserve peace, to quit the regiment.—It was a great sacrifice on his part, and, at first, none of his friends could consent to his making it; but, at last, he brought them all to acknowledge that it was, upon the whole, the best thing that could be done. Gascoigne had a friend, a major, in another regiment then in England, who was willing to make an exchange with him, and he thought that the business could be arranged without much difficulty. However, from caprice, the love of showing his power, or from some unknown reason, the lieutenant-colonel made it his pleasure to oppose the exchange, and said that it could not be done; though, as Captain Henry said, everybody knew, that by his writing a line to Lord Skreene it would have been accomplished directly. It now recurred to Godfrey, that Cunningham Falconer, being secretary to Lord Oldborough, might be of use in this affair. Cunningham had always professed the greatest regard for Godfrey, and he was determined, at least, to make this trial of his sincerity.

The secretary sent a civil answer in an official style, explaining *that his office was not the War Office;* concluding by an assurance, that if Captain Percy could point out how he could do so with propriety, nothing could give Mr C. Falconer greater pleasure than to have an opportunity of obliging him.

Now Captain Percy, having a sort of generous good faith about him, believed this last assurance; fancied that as he was no great writer, he had not explained himself well by letter, and that he should make Cunningham understand him better *vivâ voce*. Keeping his own counsel, and telling only Major Gascoigne and Captain Henry his object, he asked for a fortnight's leave of absence, and, with some difficulty, obtained it. He went to London, waited on secretary Falconer, and found him ten times more *official* in his style of conversation than in his letters. Godfrey recollected that his cousin Cunningham had always been solemnly inclined, but now he found him grown so mysterious, that he could scarcely obtain a plain answer to the simplest question. "The whole man, head and heart, seemed," as Godfrey said, "to be diplomatically closed." It was clear, from the little that Cunningham did articulate, that he would do nothing in furthering the exchange desired for Major Gascoigne; but whether this arose from his having no influence with Lord Oldborough, or from his fear of wearing it out, our young officer could not determine. He left the secretary in disgust and despair, and went to wait on commissioner Falconer, who gave him a polite invitation to dinner, and overwhelmed him with professions of friendship; but as soon as Godfrey explained his business, the commissioner protested that he could not venture to speak to Lord Oldborough on such an affair, and he earnestly advised him not to interest himself so much for Major

Gascoigne, who, though doubtless a very deserving officer, was, in fact, nothing more. He next had recourse to Buckhurst Falconer, and asked him to persuade Colonel Hauton to speak to his uncle upon the subject. This Buckhurst immediately promised to do, and kept his promise. But Colonel Hauton swore that his uncle never, on any occasion, listened to his representations; therefore it was quite useless to speak to him. After wandering from office to office, wasting hour after hour, and day after day, waiting for people who did him no good when he did see them, Godfrey at last determined to do what he should have done at first—apply to Lord Oldborough. It is always better to deal with principals than with secondaries. Lord Oldborough had the reputation of being inaccessible, haughty, and peremptory in the extreme; the secretaries, clerks, and under-clerks, "trembled at his name, each under each, through all their ranks of venality." But to Captain Percy's surprise, the moment his name was announced, the minister immediately recognized him, and received him most graciously. His lordship inquired after his old friend, Mr Percy—said that Mr Percy was one of the few really independent men he had ever known. "Mr Percy is an excellent country gentleman, and, for England's sake, I wish there were many, many more such. Now, sir, how can I serve his son?"

With frankness and brevity which suited the minister and the man, Godfrey told his business, and Lord Oldborough, with laconic decision, equally pleasing to the young soldier, replied, "that if it was possible, the thing should be done for Major Gascoigne"—inquired how long Captain Percy purposed to stay in town—desired to see him the day before he should leave London, and named the hour.

All the diplomacy of Cunningham Falconer's face

could not disguise his astonishment when he saw the manner in which his master treated Godfrey.—The next day the commissioner invited Captain Percy in a pressing manner to dine with him: "We shall have a very pleasant party," said Mr Falconer, "and Mrs Falconer insists upon the pleasure of your company—you have never seen my girls since they were children — your own near relations! — you must be better acquainted: come—I will take no denial."

Godfrey willingly accepted the invitation; he would, *perhaps*, have found means to have excused himself, had he known whom he was to meet at this dinner—Miss Hauton—the dangerous fair one, whom he had resolved to avoid. But he was in the room with her, and beyond all power of receding, before he knew his peril. The young lady looked more beautiful than ever, and more melancholy. One of the Miss Falconers took an opportunity of telling him, in confidence, the cause of her poor friend's dejection. "Her uncle, Lord Oldborough, wants to marry her to the Marquis of Twickenham, the eldest son of the Duke of Greenwich, and Miss Hauton can't endure him."

The marquis was also at this dinner—Godfrey did not much wonder at the lady's dislike; for he was a mean, peevish-looking man, had no conversation, and appeared to be fond of drinking.

"But Lord Oldborough, who is all for ambition," whispered Miss Falconer, "and who maintains that there is no such thing as love, except in novels, says, that his niece may read foolish novels after marriage as well as before, if she pleases, but that she must marry like a reasonable woman."

Godfrey pitied her; and, whilst he was pitying, Mrs Falconer arranged a party for the opera for this night, in which Godfrey found himself included. Perhaps he

was imprudent; but he was a young man, and human nature is—human nature.

At the opera Godfrey felt his danger increase every moment. Miss Hauton was particularly engaging, and many circumstances conspired to flatter his vanity, and to interest him for this fair victim of ambition. Her marquis was in the box, smelling of claret, and paying his *devoirs* to his intended bride, apparently very little to her satisfaction. Commissioner Falconer, leaning forward, complimented Miss Hauton upon her appearance this night, and observed that though it was a new opera, all fashionable eyes were turned from the stage to Lady Oldborough's box.

Miss Hauton smiled civilly upon the commissioner, then turning to Godfrey, in a low soft voice repeated—

> "And ev'n when fashion's brightest arts decoy,
> The heart distrusting asks, if this be joy?"

Godfrey was touched—she saw it, and sighed. A short time afterwards her marquis left the box. Miss Hauton recovered from her languor, and became animated in conversation with Godfrey. He felt the whole power of her charms, the immediate force of the temptation; but he recollected who she was—he recollected that she had not shown any instances of discretion which could redeem her from the consequences of a mother's disgrace: the songs he had heard from Miss Hauton's lips, Captain Bellamy and the *waltzing*, came full upon his mind.

"No," said he to himself, "as a wife I cannot think of her: were the Marquis of Twickenham out of the question, my wife she cannot be. Then honour forbids me to trifle with her affections merely to gratify my vanity or the feelings of the moment."

Captain Percy well knew that some men can satisfy their consciences by calling a certain sort of treachery

by the soft name of gallantry. He was aware that he could, like many others in similar circumstances, deceive by equivocal looks and expressions, and then throw the blame from themselves, by asking why the woman was such a fool as to believe, protesting that they never had a thought of her, and swearing that they had not the least idea she had ever understood them to mean anything serious; but Godfrey had too much good feeling and good principle to follow such examples.

Miss Hauton had a copy of the new opera before her, and as she turned over the leaves, she pointed out to him the passages that she liked. Some were peculiarly applicable to her own situation, representing a heroine forced to marry a man she hates, whilst she tenderly loves another. Godfrey could not, or would not, understand the Italian. It was perfectly well explained to him; and then, perceiving the applications made of certain lines by Miss Hauton's voice and eyes, he had no resource but in a new singer, to whom he became suddenly so attentive that nothing could distract him from the stage. When the actress ceased to sing, he found means to engage the Miss Falconers in a discussion of her merits, which, with all the nonsense and compliments to their taste the occasion required, filled up the dangerous interval till the opera was over; then—more dangerous still—waiting for carriages in *the crush room;* but through all these perils, Godfrey passed so dexterously, as to leave Miss Hauton in doubt whether she had been understood or not. Thus he hoped that her conscience would in future, if she should ever after her marriage reflect on the opera of this night, be as much at ease as his own—though perhaps not with so good reason.

After this night, Godfrey would not expose himself to a repetition of similar danger; and that he might

avoid meeting this fair lady again, he refused two invitations from Mrs Falconer to a ball at her house, and to a musical party.—This deserves to be recorded to his credit, because he was very fond both of music and dancing.

The day before he was to leave town, at the hour and minute appointed, Godfrey waited upon Lord Oldborough; but not such his reception now as it had been on his first visit to this minister: he was kept two hours waiting alone in an antechamber. At last the cabinet door opened, and Lord Oldborough appeared with a dark cold countenance, and a haughty stiffness in his whole frame. His lordship walked deliberately forward, till he came within a yard of our young officer, and then, without speaking, bent his head and body slowly, and so remained as if waiting to be informed who Captain Percy was, and what his business might be. Astonishment, and offended pride, flashed successively in Godfrey's countenance. Lord Oldborough, after fixing his interrogating eyes upon him ineffectually, receiving no explanation, seemed to come a little to his recollection, and condescended to say, "Captain Percy, I believe!——your commands with me, Captain Percy."

"My lord, I have the honour to be here by your lordship's appointment on Major Gascoigne's business."

"Sir, you had a note from me yesterday, I believe, which contained all that I have it in my power to say on Major Gascoigne's business."

"Pardon me, my lord—I never had the honour of receiving any note from your lordship."

"Very extraordinary! I sent it by my own man. You are at Batts' Hotel, sir?"

"No, my lord, at the British Hotel."

"Ha!—that is the cause of the mistake. You will find my note, sir, at Batts'."

Captain Percy bowed—Lord Oldborough bowed—not a word more passed. Lord Oldborough walked on to his carriage, which rolled him away with glorious rapidity, whilst Godfrey, his face flushed with resentment, looked after him for an instant, then putting on his hat, which the porter held to him, he walked off as fast as possible to Batts' Hotel, impatient to see the note which was to explain the meaning of this extraordinary conduct. The note he found; but it threw little light upon the business. It was written in secretary Cunningham Falconer's hand, and was as follows:—

"Lord Oldborough will inform Captain Percy when anything shall be decided upon relative to the business on which Captain Percy spoke to Lord Oldborough: and as communication by letter will answer every purpose, his lordship hopes that he shall not be the means of detaining Captain Percy longer from his regiment.

"*Tuesday*, ——."

A civil dismission!—After three attempts Godfrey obtained a sight of secretary Cunningham, who, as he thought, was at the bottom of the affair; but this suspicion was at first dissipated by the unusual openness with which the secretary looked and spoke. Apparently without fear of committing himself, he said at once that it was a very extraordinary proceeding—that he could no way account for it, but by supposing that the lieutenant-colonel in question had, through his relation, Lord Skreene, influenced his grace of Greenwich, and that Lord Oldborough could not, in the present conjuncture, make any movement in direct opposition to the duke.

"In all these things, in all transactions with politicians," said Godfrey, "there are wheels within wheels, which we simple people never suspect; and by awk-

wardly interfering with them when they are in motion, we are hurt, we know not how or why."

Cunningham smiled significantly, but was silent—his air of frankness vanished, and his solemn reserve returned. "Cunningham will never be hurt in that way," thought Godfrey; "I never saw a fellow so careful of himself. I am convinced he would not hazard his little finger to save the whole British Empire, much less to serve a private friend like me, or a poor honest man like Gascoigne."

Godfrey was too proud to make any further attempts to interest his diplomatic cousin in the affair. He rose, and bade the secretary adieu, who, with proper smiles and bows, attended him to the very door.

"Thank heaven!" thought Godfrey, as he left the secretary's office, "I am not forced to dance attendance upon any great man, or any great man's secretary. I am—like my father—independent, and will keep myself so; and if ever I live upon a smile for years, it shall not be upon the smiles of a minister, but on those of a fair lady."

Godfrey left town immediately, and returned to his regiment.

Chapter viij.

LITTLE versed in the ways of courts or courtiers, Godfrey had been easily deceived by the apparent candour of Cunningham Falconer. The fact was, that Cunningham, not directly from himself, but by means of persons of whom Lord Oldborough could have no suspicion, had insinuated to his lordship that Godfrey Percy was the secret cause of the aversion Miss Hauton showed to the proposed match with the Marquis of Twickenham. This idea once suggested

was easily confirmed by the account of the young lady's behaviour at the opera, which was reported to Lord Oldborough with proper exaggerations, and with a total misrepresentation of Godfrey's conduct. The fainting at the ball was also recollected, and many other little circumstances combined to bring conviction to Lord Oldborough's mind. He was now persuaded that Major Gascoigne's business was merely a pretence for Godfrey's coming to town: apprehension of being disappointed in completing an alliance essential to his ambitious views, pique at the idea of being deceived, and nearly duped by a boy and girl, a rooted hatred and utter contempt for love and love affairs, altogether produced that change in Lord Oldborough's manner towards Captain Percy which had appeared so extraordinary. — Had Captain Percy delayed to leave town, he would next day have received orders from his commanding officer to join his regiment. As to Major Gascoigne's business, it had made so little impression upon Lord Oldborough, that he had totally forgotten the poor major's name till Godfrey repeated it to him. Indeed, Godfrey himself could scarcely have blamed his lordship for this, had he known how much business, how many cares pressed at this time upon the mind of the unhappy statesman. —Besides a load of public business, and all the open and violent attacks of opposition, which he had usually to sustain, he was now under great and increasing anxiety from the discovery of that plot against him, among his immediate associates in office, which the Tourville papers, deciphered by commissioner Falconer and Cunningham, had but partially revealed. Lord Oldborough was in the condition of a person apprised that he is standing upon ground that is undermined, but who does not know exactly by what hand or at what moment the train that may destroy him

is to be set on fire. One word frequently recurred in the Tourville papers, which puzzled commissioner Falconer extremely, and of which he was never able to make out the meaning; the word was Gassoc. It was used thus: "We are sorry to find that the Gassoc has not agreed to our proposal."—"No answer has been given to question No. 2 by the Gassoc."—"With regard to the subsidy, of which £35,000 have not been sent or received, the Gassoc has never explained; in consequence, great discontents here."—"If the Gassoc be finally determined against the *Eagle*, means must be taken to accomplish the purposes alluded to in paragraph 4, in green (of the 7th ult.), also those in No. B. in lemon juice (of September last.)"—"The Gassoc will take notes of the mining tools forgotten—also bullets too large, and no flints (as per No. 9, in sympathetic ink)—also the sea-charts, sent instead of maps—consequent delay in march of troops—loss of fortress—to be attributed to *the Eagle*.

The Eagle, which at first had been taken for granted to be the Austrian Eagle, was discovered to be Lord Oldborough. An eagle was his lordship's crest, and the sea-charts, and the mining tools, brought the sense home to him conclusively. It was plain that the Gassoc stood for some person who was inimical to Lord Oldborough, but who it could be was the question. Commissioner Falconer suggested, that for *Gassoc*, you should read *Gosshawk*; then, said he, "by finding what nobleman or gentleman has a gosshawk in his arms, you have the family name, and the individual is afterwards easily ascertained." To the Heralds' Office the commissioner went a gosshawking, but after spending a whole day with the assistance of Garter-king-at-arms, he could make nothing of his gosshawks, and he gave them up.

He next presumed that there might be a mistake of one letter in the foreign spelling of the word, and that *Gassoc* should be *Cassock*, and might then mean a certain bishop, who was known to be a particular enemy of Lord Oldborough. But still there were things ascribed to the Gassoc, which could not come within the jurisdiction or cognizance of the Cassock —and the commissioner was reluctantly obliged to give up the Church. He next suggested, that not only one letter, but every letter in the word might be mistaken in the foreign spelling, and that *Gassoc* might be the French or German written imitation of the oral sound of some English proper name. The commissioner supported this opinion very plausibly by citing many instances of the barbarous spelling of English names by foreigners: Bassompierre writes Jorchaux for York-house, Innimthort for Kensington; even in the polite memoirs of le Comte de Grammont, we have Soutkask for Southesk, and Warméstre for some English name not yet deciphered. Upon this hint the commissioner and Cunningham made anagrams of half the noble names in England, but in vain.

Afterwards, recollecting that it was the fashion at one time even to pun in the coats of arms of the nobility, and in the choice of their mottos, he went to work again at the Heralds' Office, and tried a course of puns, but to no purpose: the commissioner was mortified to find all his ingenuity at fault.

Cunningham took care not to suggest anything, therefore he could never be convicted of mistake. Nor was he in the least vexed by his father's or his own fruitless labour, because he thought it might tend to his future advancement.

Lord Oldborough had thrown out a hint that it would soon be necessary to recall the present and send

a new envoy or resident to the German court in question; Cunningham nourished a hope of being chosen for this purpose, as the Tourville papers were already known to him, and he could, under private instructions, negociate with M. de Tourville, and draw from him an explanation. He did not, however, trust even his father with the hope he had conceived, but relied on his own address, and continually strove, by oblique hints, to magnify the danger of leaving any part of the plot unravelled.

What effect these suggestions produced, or whether they produced any, Cunningham was unable to judge from the minister's impenetrable countenance. Lord Oldborough lost not a moment in repairing the mistake about sea-charts, and the omission of mining tools, which he had discovered from a paragraph in the Tourville papers; he stayed not to inquire whether the error had been wilful or unintentional —*that* he left for future investigation. His next object was the subsidy. This day the Duke of Greenwich gave a Cabinet dinner. After dinner, when the servants had retired, and when none of the company were prepared for such a stroke, Lord Oldborough, in his decided, but very calm manner, began with, "My lords, I must call your attention to an affair of some importance—the subsidy from the secret service to our German ally."

All who had within them sins unwhipped of justice trembled.

"I have learned, no matter how," continued Lord Oldborough, "that, by some strange mistake, £35,000 of that subsidy were not remitted at the time appointed by us, and that discontents, likely to be prejudicial to his Majesty's service, have arisen in consequence of this delay."

His lordship paused, and appeared to take no notice

of the faces of feigned astonishment and real consciousness by which he was surrounded. Each looked at the other to inquire by what means this secret was divulged, and to discover if possible how much more was known. Lord Skreene began at the same moment with the Duke of Greenwich to suggest that some clerk or agent must certainly be much to blame. Lord Oldborough, in his decided tone, replied that it was indifferent to him what clerk, agent, or principal was to blame in the business; but that if the money were not *bonâ fide* remitted, and acknowledged by the court to which it was promised, and before any disagreeable consequences should ensue, he must be under the necessity of stating the affair to his Majesty—of resigning his office, and bringing the whole before Parliament.

The terror of his voice and lightning of his eye, the dread of his determined spirit, operated powerfully. The subsidy was remitted the next day, though at the expence of a service of plate which Lord Skreene had bespoken for his mistress, and though secretary Cope was compelled to sell at some disadvantage a few of the very few remaining acres of his paternal estate, to make good what had been borrowed from the secret service money.

At the Cabinet dinner, the keen eye of Lord Oldborough had discerned some displeasure lurking in the mind of the Duke of Greenwich—a man of considerable political consequence from his rank and connexions, and from the number of voices he could command or influence. Lord Oldborough knew that, if he could regain the duke, he could keep in awe his other enemies. His grace was a puzzle-headed, pompous fool, whom Heaven had cursed with the desire to be a statesman. He had not more than four ideas; but to those four, which he conceived to

be his own, he was exclusively attached.—Yet a person of address and cunning could put things into his head, which after a time he would find there, believe to be his own, and which he would then propose as new with great solemnity, and support with much zeal. Lord Oldborough, however, was neither able nor willing to manage his grace in this manner; he was too imperious; his pride of character was at continual variance with the duke's pride of rank. The duke's was a sort of pride which Lord Oldborough did not always understand, and which, when he did, he despised—it was a species of pride that was perpetually taking offence at trifling failures in etiquette, of which Lord Oldborough, intent upon great objects, was sometimes guilty. There is a class of politicians who err by looking for causes in too high a sphere, and by attributing the changes which perplex states and monarchs to great passions and large motives. Lord Oldborough was one of this class, and with all his talents would have failed in every attempt to comprehend and conciliate the Duke of Greenwich, had he not been assisted by the inferior genius of commissioner Falconer. While his lordship was thus searching far and wide among the reasonable and probable causes for the duke's coldness, examining and re-examining the bearings of every political measure, as it could affect his grace's interest immediately or remotely, commissioner Falconer sought for the cause, and found it in the lowest scale of trifles—he made the discovery by means which Lord Oldborough could not have devised, and would not have used. The duke had a favourite under-clerk, who, for a valuable consideration, disclosed the secret to the commissioner. Lord Oldborough had sent his grace a note, written in his own hand, sealed with a wafer. The clerk, who was present when the note was received, said that the duke's

face flushed violently, and that he flung the note immediately to his secretary, exclaiming, "Open that, if you please, sir—*I wonder how any man can have the impertinence to send me his spittle!*"

This nice offence, which bore so coarse a comment, had alienated the mind of the Duke of Greenwich. When commissioner Falconer had thus sagaciously discovered the cause of the noble duke's displeasure, he with great address applied a remedy. Without ever hinting that he knew of the offensive circumstance, having some business to transact with the duke, he contrived, as if undesignedly, to turn the conversation upon his friend Lord Oldborough's strange and unaccountable negligence of common forms and etiquette; as a proof of which he told the duke in confidence, and in a very low voice, an anecdote, which he heard from his son Cunningham, from Lord Oldborough's own secretary, or the commissioner protested that he would not, he could not have believed it—his lordship had been once actually upon the point of sealing a note with a wafer to one of the royal dukes!—had the wafer absolutely on his lips, when Cunningham felt it his duty to take the liberty of remonstrating. Upon which, Lord Oldborough, as commissioner Falconer said, looked with the utmost surprise, and replied, "I have sealed with a wafer to the Duke of Greenwich, and *he* was not offended."

This anecdote, the truth of which it fortunately never occurred to the duke to doubt, had an immediate and powerful effect upon his mind, as the commissioner saw by the complacent smile that played on his countenance, and still further by the condescending pity with which his grace observed, that "Great geniuses never understand common things—but do everything awkwardly, whether they cut a book, or seal a note."

Mr Falconer having thus brought the duke into fine temper, left him in the best dispositions possible toward Lord Oldborough, went to his lordship to report progress, and to boast of his success; but he told only as much of what had passed as he thought would suit the statesman's character, and ensure his approbation.—The Duke of Greenwich was as much pleased by this reconciliation as Lord Oldborough; for, though in a fit of offended pride he had been so rash as to join his lordship's enemies, yet he had always dreaded coming to open war with such an adversary. His grace felt infinitely more safe and comfortable when he was leaning upon Lord Oldborough than when he stood opposed to him, even in secret. There were points in politics in which he and Lord Oldborough coincided, though they had arrived at these by far different roads. They agreed in an over-weening love of aristocracy, and in an inclination toward arbitrary power; they agreed in a hatred of innovation; they agreed in the principle that free discussion should be discouraged, and that the country should be governed with a high and strong hand. On these principles Lord Oldborough always acted but seldom spoke, and the Duke of Greenwich continually talked but seldom acted: in fact, his grace, "though he roared so loud, and looked so wondrous grim," was, in action, afraid of every shadow. Right glad was he to have his political vaunts made good by a coadjutor of commanding talents, resource, and civil courage. Yet, as Lord Oldborough observed, with a man of such wayward pride and weak understanding, there was no security from day to day for the permanence of his attachment. It was then that commissioner Falconer, ever ready at expedients, suggested that an alliance between his grace's family and his lordship's would be the best possible security; and that the

alliance might be easily effected, since it was evident of late that the Marquis of Twickenham was much disposed to admire the charms of his lordship's niece, Miss Hauton. Lord Oldborough had not remarked that the marquis admired anything but good wine; his lordship's attention was not turned to these things, nor had he, in general, much faith in friendships founded on family alliances; but he observed that the duke was peculiarly tenacious of connexions and relationships, and, therefore, this might be the best method of holding him.

From the moment Lord Oldborough decided in favour of this scheme, Mr and Mrs Falconer had done all in their power, with the utmost zeal and address, to forward it, by contriving continual dancing parties and musical meetings, at their house, for the young people. Lady Oldborough, who was sickly, whose manners were not popular, and who could not bear *to be put out of her way*, was quite unsuited to this sort of business, and rejoiced that the Falconers took it off her hands. Things were just in this state, and Lord Oldborough had fixed his mind upon the match, when Godfrey Percy's arrival in town had threatened disappointment. In consequence of this fear, Lord Oldborough not only despatched Godfrey directly to his regiment, but, to put an end to the danger at once, to banish the idea of seeing him again completely out of the young lady's head, the cruel uncle and decided politician had Godfrey's regiment ordered immediately to the West Indies.

LETTER FROM GODFREY PERCY TO HIS FATHER.

"My dear Father,

"We have a new lieutenant-colonel. Lord Skreene has removed his precious nephew to another

regiment, and to punish us for not liking the pretty boy, has ordered us all off to the West Indies: so ends our croaking. Our new King Log we cannot complain of as too young, or too much on the *qui vive:* he looks as if he was far gone in a lethargy, can hardly keep himself awake while he is giving the word of command, and, instead of being a martinet, I am sure he would not care if the whole corps wore their regimentals the wrong side outwards.—Gascoigne will have all the regimental business on his shoulders, and no man can do it better.—He is now at my elbow, supplying four hundred men and forty officers with heads. The noise of questions and commands, and the notes of preparation, are so loud and dissonant, that I hardly know what I write. Gascoigne, though not benefited, was obliged to me for my wronghead-journey to London. Henry was very angry with Lord Oldborough for jilting me—Gascoigne with much ado kept him in proper manners toward the lieutenant-colonel, and I, in admiration of Gascoigne, kept my temper miraculously. But there was an impertinent puppy of an ensign, a partisan of the lieutenant-colonel, who wanted, I'm convinced, to have the credit of fighting a duel for the colonel, and he one day said, in Captain Henry's hearing, that 'it was no wonder some men should rail against ministerial *influence*, who had no friends to look to, and were men of no family.' —'Do you mean that for me, sir?' said Henry. 'Judge for yourself, sir.' Poor Henry judged ill, and challenged the ensign.—They fought, and the ensign was slightly wounded. This duel has wakened curiosity again about Captain Henry's birth, and he is in danger of being exposed continually to things he could not like, and could not well resent. He consulted Gascoigne and me, and has told us all he knows of his history.—Read what follows to yourself, for I

have permission to speak of his affairs only to you. Captain Henry assured us that he really does not know to what family he belongs, nor who his father and mother were; but he has reason to believe that they were Irish. He was bred up in a merchant's house in Dublin. The merchant broke, and went off with his family to America. Henry was at that time fifteen or sixteen. The merchant then said, that Henry was not his nephew, nor any relation to him, but hinted that he was the son of a Mr Henry, who had taken an unfortunate part in *the troubles* of Ireland, and who had *suffered*—that his mother had been a servant-maid, and that she was dead. The merchant added, that he had taken care of Henry from regard to his father, but that, obliged by his own failure in business to quit the country, he must thenceforward resign the charge. —He farther observed, that the army was now the young man's only resource, and, on taking leave, he put into Henry's hands a £50 note, and an ensign's commission. With his commission he joined his regiment, which was at Cork. A few days after his arrival, a Cork banker called upon him, and inquired whether he was ensign Charles Henry; and upon his answering in the affirmative, informed him that he had orders to pay him £400 a year in quarterly payments. The order came from a house in Dublin, and this was all the banker knew. On Henry's application in Dublin, he was told that they had direction to stop payment of the annuity if any questions were asked.—Of course, Henry asked no more.—The annuity has been regularly paid to him ever since.—When he was scarcely seventeen, he was pillaged of a couple of hundred pounds one night by a set of sharpers at the gaming-table: this loss roused his prudence, and he has never played since. He has for many years lived within his pay; for he prudently con-

sidered, that the extraordinary supply might suddenly fail, and then he might be left in debt and distress, and at the same time with habits of extravagance.—Instead of which, he has laid up money every year, and has a considerable sum. He wishes to quit the army, and to go into a mercantile house, for which his early education has fitted him. He has a particular talent for languages: speaks French and Italian accurately—Spanish and Dutch well enough for all the purposes of commerce. So any mercantile house, who wants a partner, agent, or *clerk for foreign affairs* (perhaps I am not correct in the technical terms), could not do better than to take Charles Henry. For his integrity and honour I would answer with my life. Now, my dear father, could you have the goodness to assist us so far as to write and inquire about the partner in London of those Dutch merchants, whom you had an opportunity of obliging at the time of the shipwreck?—I cannot recollect their strange names, but if I am not mistaken, they left you their address, and that of their London correspondent.—If this partner should be a substantial man, perhaps our best plan would be to try to get Henry into his house. You have certainly some claim there, and the Dutchmen desired we would apply to them if ever they could do anything to serve us—we can but try. I am afraid you will say, '*This is like one of Godfrey's wild schemes.*' I am still more afraid that you should think Henry's romantic story is *against him*—but such things are—that is all I can say. Here is no motive for deception; and if you were to see the young man, his countenance and manner would immediately persuade you of his perfect truth and ingenuousness. I am aware that his romantic history would not do for the Dutch merchants, or the London partner; they would pro-

bably set him down directly for an adventurer, and refuse to have anything to do with him: so I see no necessity for beginning by stating it. I know you hate, and I am sure so do I, all novel-like concealments and mysteries; but because a man makes a bargain with another, he is not obliged to tell him his whole history—because he takes him for his partner or his master, he is not called upon to make him his confidant. All that the merchants can want or have a right to know is forthcoming and clear—character and money.

"My affectionate love and old-fashioned duty to my dear mother—pray assure her and my sisters that they shall hear from me, though I am going to have 'one foot on sea and one on land.'

"Tell dear Caroline the portfolio she made for me shall go with me to the world's end; and Rosamond's *Tippoo Saib* shall see the *West* Indies—Gascoigne has been in the West Indies before now, and he says and proves, that temperance and spice are the best preservatives in that climate; so you need not fear for me, for you know I love pepper better than port. I am called away, and can only add that the yellow fever there has subsided, as an officer who arrived last week tells me. Our regiment is just going to embark in high spirits.—God bless you all.

"Your affectionate son,

"G. Percy.

"P.S.—Don't let my mother or Rosamond trust to newspaper reports—trust to nothing but my letters; —Caroline, I know, is fit to be the sister, and I hope will some time be the mother, of heroes."

Chapter ix.

LORD OLDBOROUGH expected that the prompt measure of despatching the dangerous Godfrey to the West Indies would restore things to their former train. For a week after Godfrey Percy's departure, Miss Hauton seemed much affected by it, and was from morning till night languid or in the sullens: of all which Lord Oldborough took not the slightest notice. In the course of a fortnight Miss Falconer, who became inseparable from Miss Hauton, flattering, pitying, and humouring her, contrived to recover the young lady from this fit of despondency, and produced her again at musical parties. She was passionately fond of music; the Miss Falconers played on the pianoforte and sung, their brother John accompanied exquisitely on the flute, and the Marquis of Twickenham, who was dull as "the fat weed that grows on Lethe's brink," stood by—admiring. His proposal was made in form—and in form the young lady evaded it—in form her uncle, Lord Oldborough, told her that the thing must be, and proceeded directly to decide upon the settlements with the Duke of Greenwich, and set the lawyers to work. In the meantime, the bride-elect wept, and deplored, and refused to eat, drink, or speak, except to the Miss Falconers, with whom she was closeted for hours, and to whom the task of managing her was consigned by common consent. The marquis, who, though he was, as he said, much in love, was not very delicate as to the possession of the lady's affections, wondered that any one going to be married to the Marquis of Twickenham could be so shy and so melancholy; but her confidantes assured him that it was all uncommon refinement and sensibility, which was their sweetest Maria's only fault. Excellent claret,

and a moderately good opinion of himself, persuaded the marquis of the truth of all the Miss Falconers pleased to say, and her uncle graciously granted the delays, which the young lady prayed for week after week—till, at last, striking his hand upon the table, Lord Oldborough said, "There must be an end of this—the papers must be signed this day se'nnight—Maria Hauton shall be married this day fortnight." Maria Hauton was sent for to her uncle's study; heard her doom in sullen silence; but she made no show of resistance, and Lord Oldborough was satisfied. An hour afterwards commissioner Falconer begged admission, and presented himself with a face of consternation —Lord Oldborough, not easily surprised or alarmed, waited, however, with some anxiety, till he should speak.

"My lord, I beg pardon for this intrusion: I know, at this time, you are much occupied; but it is absolutely necessary I should communicate—I feel it to be my duty immediately—and I cannot hesitate—though I really do not know how to bring myself——"

There was something in the apparent embarrassment and distress of Mr Falconer, which Lord Oldborough's penetrating eye instantly discerned to be affected.—His lordship turned a chair towards him, but said not a word.—The commissioner sat down like a man acting despair; but looking for a moment in Lord Oldborough's face, he saw what his lordship was thinking of, and immediately his affected embarrassment became real and great.

"Well, commissioner, what is the difficulty?"

"My lord, I have within this quarter of an hour heard what will ruin me for ever in your lordship's opinion, unless your lordship does me the justice to believe that I never heard or suspected it before—I have only to trust to your magnanimity—and I do."

Lord Oldborough bowed slightly—"The fact, if you please, my dear sir."

"The fact, my lord, is, that Captain Bellamy, whose eyes, I suppose, have been quickened by jealousy, has discovered what has escaped us all—what never would have occurred to me—what never could have entered into my mind to suspect—what I still hope——"

"The fact, sir, let me beg."

The urgency of Lord Oldborough's look and voice admitted of no delay.

"Miss Hauton is in love with my son John."

"Indeed!"

This "Indeed!" was pronounced in a tone which left the commissioner in doubt what it expressed, whether pure surprise, indignation, or contempt—most of the last, perhaps: he longed to hear it repeated, but he had not that satisfaction. Lord Oldborough turned abruptly—walked up and down the room with such a firm tread as sounded ominously to the commissioner's ear.

"So then, sir, Miss Hauton, I think you tell me, is in love with Cornet Falconer?"

"Captain Bellamy says so, my lord."

"Sir, I care not what Captain Bellamy says—nor do I well know who or what he is—much less what he can have to do with my family affairs—I ask, sir, what reason you have to believe that my niece is in love, as it is called, with your son? You certainly would not make such a report to me without good reason for believing it—what are your reasons?"

"Excuse me, my lord, my reasons are founded on information which I do not think myself at liberty to repeat: but upon hearing the report from——" The commissioner, in the hurry and confusion of his mind, and in his new situation, totally lost his *tact*, and at

this moment was upon the point of again saying *from Captain Bellamy ;* but the flash of Lord Oldborough's eye warned him of his danger—he dropped the name.

"I immediately went to sound my son John, and, as far as I can judge, he has not yet any suspicion of the truth."

Lord Oldborough's countenance cleared. The commissioner recovered his presence of mind, for he thought he saw his way before him. "I thought it my duty to let your lordship know the first hint I had of such a nature ; for how soon it might be surmised, or what steps might be taken, I must leave it to your lordship to judge—I can only assure you, that as yet, to the best of my belief, John has not any suspicion ; fortunately, he is very slow—and not very bright."

Lord Oldborough stood with compressed lips seeming to listen, but deep in thought.

"Mr commissioner Falconer, let us understand one another well now—as we have done hitherto. If your son, Cornet Falconer, were to marry Maria Hauton, she would no longer be my niece, he would have a portionless, friendless, and, in my opinion, a very silly wife. He is, I think you say, not very bright himself—he would probably remain a cornet the rest of his days—all idea of assistance being of course out of the question in that case, from me or mine, to him or his."

The awful pause which Lord Oldborough made, and his determined look, gave the commissioner opportunity to reflect much in a few seconds.

"On the contrary," resumed his lordship, "if your son John, my dear sir, show the same desire to comply with my wishes, and to serve my interests, which I have found in the rest of his family, he shall find me willing and able to advance him as well as his brother Cunningham."

"Your lordship's wishes will, I can answer for it, be laws to him, as well as to the rest of his family."

"In one word then—let Cornet Falconer be married elsewhere, within a fortnight, and I prophesy that within a year he shall be a field-officer—within two years, a lieutenant-colonel."

Commissioner Falconer bowed twice—low to the field-officer—lower to the lieutenant-colonel.

"I have long had a match in my eye for John," said the father; "but a fortnight, my gracious lord—that is so very short a time! Your lordship will consider there are delicacies in these cases—no young lady—it is impossible—your lordship must be sensible that it is really impossible, with a young lady of any family."

"I am aware that it is difficult, but not impossible," replied Lord Oldborough, rising deliberately.

The commissioner took his leave, stammering somewhat of "nothing being impossible for a friend," courtier, he should have said.

The commissioner set to work in earnest about the match he had in view for John. Not one, but several fair visions flitted before the eye of his politic mind. The Miss Chattertons—any one of whom would, he knew, come readily within the terms prescribed, but then they had neither fortune nor connexions. A relation of Lady Jane Granville's—excellent connexion, and reasonable fortune; but there all the decorum of regular approaches and time would be necessary: luckily, a certain Miss Petcalf was just arrived from India with a large fortune. The general, her father, was anxious to introduce his daughter to the fashionable world, and to marry her for connexion—fortune no object to him—delicacies he would waive. The commissioner saw—counted—and decided—(there was a brother Petcalf, too, who might do for Georgiana—but for that no hurry)—John was

asked by his father if he would like to be a major in a year, and a lieutenant-colonel in two years?

To be sure he would—was he a fool?

Then he must be married in a fortnight.

John did not see how this conclusion followed immediately from the premises, for John was not *quite* a fool; so he answered "Indeed!" An *indeed* so unlike Lord Oldborough's, that the commissioner, struck with the contrast, could scarcely maintain the gravity the occasion required, and he could only pronounce the words, "General Petcalf has a daughter."

"Ay, Miss Petcalf—ay, he is a general; true—now I see it all: well, I'm their man—I have no objection——But Miss Petcalf!—is not that the Indian girl? Is not there a drop of black blood?——No, no, father," cried John, drawing himself up, "I'll be d—d . . ."

"Hear me first, my own John," cried his father, much and justly alarmed, for this motion was the precursor of an obstinate fit, which, if John took, perish father, mother, the whole human race, he could not be moved from the settled purpose of his soul. "Hear me, my beloved John—for you are a man of sense," said his unblushing father: "do you think I'd have a drop of black blood for my daughter-in-law, much less let my favourite son——But there's none—it is climate—all climate—as you may see by only looking at Mrs Governor Carneguy, how she figures everywhere; and Miss Petcalf is nothing near so dark as Mrs Carneguy, surely."

"Surely," said John.

"And her father, the general, gives her an Indian fortune to suit an Indian complexion."

"That's good, at any rate," quoth John.

"Yes, my dear major—yes, my lieutenant-colonel—to be sure that's good. So to secure the good the gods

provide us, go you this minute, dress, and away to your fair Indian! I'll undertake the business with the general."

"But a fortnight, my dear father," said John, looking into the glass: "how can that be?"

"Look again, and tell me how it can *not* be? Pray don't put that difficulty into Miss Petcalf's head—into her heart I am sure it would never come."

John yielded his shoulder to the push his father gave him towards the door, but suddenly turning back, "Zounds! father, a fortnight!" he exclaimed: "why, there won't be time to buy even boots!"

"And what are even boots," replied his father, "to such a man as you? Go, go, man; your legs are better than all the boots in the world."

Flattery can find her way to soothe the dullest, coldest ear *alive*. John looked in the glass again—dressed—and went to flatter Miss Petcalf. The proposal was graciously accepted, for the commissioner stated, as he was permitted in confidence, to the general, that his son was under the special patronage of Lord Oldborough, who would make him a lieutenant-colonel in two years. The general, who looked only for connexion and genteel family, was satisfied. The young lady started at the first mention of an *early day;* but there was an absolute necessity for pressing that point, since the young officer was ordered to go abroad in a fortnight, and could not bear to leave England without completing his union with Miss Petcalf. These reasons, as no other were to be had, proved sufficient with father and daughter.

John was presented with a captain's commission. He, before the end of the fortnight, looked again and again in the glass to take leave of himself, hung up his flute, and—was married. The bride and bridegroom were presented to Lord and Lady Oldborough, and went immediately abroad.

Thus the forms of homage and the rights of vassalage are altered; the competition for favour having succeeded to the dependence for protection, the feudal lord of ancient times could ill compete in power with the influence of the modern political patron.

Pending the negotiation of this marriage, and during the whole of this eventful fortnight, Cunningham Falconer had been in the utmost anxiety that can be conceived—not for a brother's interests, but for his own: his own advancement, he judged, would depend upon the result, and he could not rest day or night till the marriage was happily completed—though, at the same time, he secretly cursed all the loves and marriages, which had drawn Lord Oldborough's attention away from that embassy on which his own heart was fixed.

Buckhurst, the while, though not admitted behind the scenes, said he was sufficiently amused by what he saw on the stage, enjoyed the comedy of the whole, and pretty well made out for himself the double plot. The confidante, Miss Falconer, played her part to admiration, and prevailed on Miss Hauton to appear on the appointed day in the character of a *reasonable woman;* and accordingly she suffered herself to be led, in fashionable style, to the hymeneal altar by the Marquis of Twickenham. This dénouement satisfied Lord Oldborough.

Chapter x.

THE day after his niece's marriage was happily effected, Lord Oldborough said to his secretary, "Now, Mr Cunningham Falconer, I have leisure to turn my mind again to the Tourville papers."

"I was in hopes, my lord," said the secretary (*se composant le visage*), "I was in hopes that this happy alliance, which secures the Duke of Greenwich, would have put your lordship's mind completely at ease, and that you would not have felt it necessary to examine farther into that mystery."

"Weak men never foresee adversity during prosperity, nor prosperity during adversity," replied Lord Oldborough. "His Majesty has decided immediately to recall his present envoy at that German court; a new one will be sent, and the choice of that envoy his Majesty is graciously pleased to leave to me.—You are a very young man, Mr Cunningham Falconer, but you have given me such *written* irrefragable proofs of your ability and information, that I have no scruple in recommending you to his Majesty as a person to whom his interests may be intrusted, and the zeal and attachment your family have shown me in actions, not in words only, have convinced me that I cannot choose better for my private affairs. Therefore, if the appointment be agreeable to you, you cannot too soon make what preparations may be necessary."

Cunningham, delighted, made his acknowledgments and thanks for the honour and the favour conferred upon him with all the eloquence in his power.

"I endeavour not to do anything hastily, Mr Cunningham Falconer," said his lordship. "I frankly tell you, that I was not at first prepossessed in your favour, nor did I feel inclined to do more for you than that to which I had been induced by peculiar circumstances. Under this prepossession, I perhaps did not for some time do justice to your talents; but I should be without judgment, or without candour, if I did not feel and acknowledge the merit of the performance which I hold in my hand."

The performance was a pamphlet in support of Lord

Oldborough's administration, published in Cunningham's name, but the greater part of it was written by his good genius in the garret.

"On *this*," said Lord Oldborough, putting his hand upon it as it lay on the table, "on *this* found your just title, sir, to my esteem and confidence."

Would not the truth have burst from any man of common generosity, honour, or honesty?—Would not a man who had any feeling, conscience, or shame, supposing he could have resolved to keep his secret, at this instant, have been ready to sink into the earth with confusion, under this unmerited praise?—In availing himself falsely of a title to esteem and confidence, then fraudulently of another's talents to obtain favour, honour, and emolument, would not a blush, or silence, some awkwardness, or some hesitation, have betrayed him to eyes far less penetrating than those of Lord Oldborough? Yet nothing of this was felt by Cunningham: he made, with a good grace, all the disqualifying speeches of a modest author, repeated his thanks and assurances of grateful attachment, and retired triumphant.—It must be acknowledged that he was fit for a diplomatist. His credentials were forthwith made out in form, and his instructions, public and private, furnished. No expence was spared in fitting him out for his embassy—his preparations made, his suite appointed, his liveries finished, his carriage at the door, he departed in grand style; and all commissioner Falconer's friends, of which, at this time, he could not fail to have many, poured in with congratulations on the rapid advancement of his sons, and on all sides exclamations were heard in favour of *friends in power*.

"True—very true, indeed. And see what it is," said commissioner Falconer, turning to Buckhurst, "see what it is to have a son so perverse, that he will not make use of a good friend when he has one, and

who will not accept the promise of an excellent living when he can get it!"

All his friends and acquaintance now joining in one chorus told Buckhurst, in courtly terms, that he was a fool, and Buckhurst began to think they must be right. —"For here," said he to himself, "are my two precious brothers finely provided for, one an envoy, the other a major *in esse*, and a lieutenant-colonel *in posse*—and I, *in esse* and *in posse*, what?—Nothing but a good fellow—one day with the four-in-hand club, the next in my chambers, studying the law, by which I shall never make a penny. And there's Miss Caroline Percy, who has declined the honour of my hand, no doubt, merely because I have indulged a little in good company, instead of immuring myself with Coke and Blackstone, Viners and Saunders, Bosanquet and Schoales, or chaining myself to a special pleader's desk, like cousin Alfred, that galley-slave of the law!—No, no, I'll not make a galley-slave of myself. Besides, at my mother's, in all that set, and in the higher circles with Hauton and the Clays, and those people, whenever I appear in the character of a poor barrister, I am scouted—should never have *got on* at all, but for my being a wit—a wit!—and have not I wit enough to make my fortune? As my father says, What hinders me?—My conscience only. And why should my conscience be so cursedly delicate, so unlike other men's consciences?"

In this humour, Buckhurst was easily persuaded by his father to take orders. The paralytic incumbent of Chipping-Friars had just at this time another stroke of the palsy, on which Colonel Hauton congratulated the young deacon; and, to keep him in patience while waiting for the third stroke, made him chaplain to his regiment.—The Clays also introduced him to their uncle, Bishop Clay, who had, as they told him, taken

a prodigious fancy to him; for he observed, that in carving a partridge, Buckhurst never touched the wing with a knife, but after nicking the joint, tore it off, so as to leave adhering to the bone that muscle obnoxious to all good eaters.—The bishop pronounced him to be "a capital carver."

Fortune at this time threw into Buckhurst's hands unasked, unlooked for, and in the oddest way imaginable, a gift of no small value in itself, and an earnest of her future favours.

At some high festival, Buckhurst was invited to dine with the bishop. Now Bishop Clay was a rubicund, full-blown, short-necked prelate, with the fear of apoplexy continually before him, except when dinner was on the table; and at this time a dinner was on the table, rich with every dainty of the season, that earth, air, and sea could provide. Grace being first said by the chaplain, the bishop sat down "*richly to enjoy;*" but it happened in the first onset, that a morsel too large for his lordship's swallow stuck in his throat. The bishop grew crimson—purple—black in the face; the chaplain started up, and untied his neck-cloth. The guests crowded round, one offering water, another advising bread, another calling for a raw egg, another thumping his lordship on the back. Buckhurst Falconer, with more presence of mind than was shown by any other person, saved his patron's life. He blew with force in the bishop's ear, and thus produced such a salutary convulsion in the throat, as relieved his lordship from the danger of suffocation.* The bishop, recovering his breath and vital functions, sat up, restored

* Some learned persons assert that this could not have happened. We can only aver that it did happen. The assertions against the possibility of the fact remind us of the physician in Zadig, who, as the fable tells us, wrote a book to prove that Zadig should have gone blind, though he had actually recovered the use of his eye.—Zadig never read the book.

to life, and dinner—he eat again, and drank to Mr Buckhurst Falconer's health, with thanks for this good service to the Church, to which he prophesied the reverend young gentleman would, in good time, prove an honour. And that he might be, in some measure, the means of accomplishing his own prophecy, Bishop Clay did, before he slept, which was immediately after dinner, present Mr Buckhurst Falconer with a living worth £400 a year; a living which had not fallen into the bishop's gift above half a day, and which, as there were six worthy clergymen in waiting for it, would necessarily have been disposed of the next morning.

"Oh! star of patronage, shine ever thus upon the Falconers!" cried Buckhurst, when, elevated with wine in honour of the Church, he gave an account to his father at night of the success of the day.—"Oh! thou, whose influence has, for us, arrested Fortune at the top of her wheel, be ever thus propitious!—Only make me a dean. Have you not made my brother, the dunce, a colonel? and my brother, the knave, an envoy?——I only pray to be a dean—I ask not yet to be a bishop—you see I have some conscience left."

"True," said his father, laughing. "Now go to bed, Buckhurst; you may, for your fortune is up."

"Ha! my good cousin Percys, where are you now?—Education, merit, male and female, where are you now?—Planting cabbages, and presiding at a day-school: one son plodding in a pleader's office—another cast in an election for an hospital physician—a third encountering a plague in the West Indies. I give you joy!"

No wonder the commissioner exulted, for he had not only provided thus rapidly for his sons, but he had besides happy expectations for himself.—With Lord Oldborough he was now in higher favour and confidence than he had ever hoped to be. Lord Old-

borough, who was a man little prone to promise, and who always did more than he said, had, since the marriage of his niece, thrown out a hint that he was aware of the expence it must have been to commissioner and Mrs Falconer to give entertainments continually, and to keep open house, as they had done this winter, for his political friends—no instance of zeal in his Majesty's service, his lordship said, he hoped was ever lost upon him, and, if he continued in power, he trusted he should find occasion to show his gratitude. This from another minister might mean nothing but to pay with words; from Lord Oldborough the commissioner justly deemed it as good as a promissory note for a lucrative place. Accordingly he put it in circulation directly among his creditors, and he no longer trembled at the expence at which he had lived and was living. Both Mrs Falconer and he had ever considered a good cook, and an agreeable house, as indispensably necessary to those who would rise in the world; and they laid it down as a maxim, that, if people wished to grow rich, they must begin by appearing so. Upon this plan everything in their establishment, table, servants, equipage, dress, were far more splendid than their fortune could afford. The immediate gratification which resulted from this display, combining with their maxims of policy, encouraged the whole family to continue this desperate game. Whenever the timidity of the commissioner had started; when, pressed by his creditors, he had backed, and had wished to stop in this course of extravagance; his lady, of a more intrepid character, urged him forward, pleading that he had gone too far to recede—that the poorer they were, the more necessary to keep up the brilliant appearance of affluence. How else could her daughters, after all the sums that had been risked upon them, hope to be advantageously established? How

otherwise could they preserve what her friend Lady Jane Granville so justly styled the patronage of fashion?

When success proved Mrs Falconer to be right, "Now, commissioner Falconer! Now!" How she triumphed, and how she talked! Her sons all in such favour—her daughters in such fashion! No party without the Miss Falconers!——Miss Falconers must sing—Miss Falconers must play—Miss Falconers must dance, or no lady of a house could feel herself happy, or could think she had done her duty—no piano, no harp could draw such crowds as the Miss Falconers. It was the ambition among the fashionable men to dance with the Miss Falconers, to flirt with the Miss Falconers. "Not merely flirting, ma'am," as Mrs Falconer said, and took proper pains should be heard, "but several serious proposals from very respectable quarters:" however, none *yet* exactly what she could resolve to accept for her girls—she looked high for them, she owned—she thought she had a right to look high. Girls in fashion should not take the first offers—they should hold up their heads: why should they not aspire to rank, why not to title, as well as to fortune?

Poor Petcalf! General Petcalf's son had been for some time, as it was well known, desperately in love with Miss Georgiana Falconer; but what chance had he now? However, he was to be *managed:* he was useful sometimes, as a partner, "to whom one may say one is engaged when a person one does not choose to dance with asks for the honour of one's hand—useful sometimes to turn over the leaves of the music-book—useful always as an attendant in public places—useful, in short, to be exhibited as a captive; for one captive leads to another conquest." And Miss Arabella Falconer too could boast her conquests,

though nobody merely by looking at her would have guessed it: but she was a striking exemplification of the truth of Lady Jane Granville's maxim, that fashion, like Venus's girdle, can beautify any girl, let her be ever so ugly.

And now the Falconer family having risen and succeeded beyond their most sanguine hopes by a combination of lucky circumstances, and by adherence to their favourite system, we leave them fortified in their principles, and at the height of prosperity.

Chapter xi.

FORTUNE, as if she had been piqued by Mr Percy's disdain, and jealous of his professed reliance upon the superior power of her rival, Prudence, seemed now determined to humble him and all his family, to try if she could not force him to make some of the customary sacrifices of principle to propitiate her favour.

Unsuspicious of the designs that were carrying forward against him in secret, Mr Percy had quite forgotten his fears that his wicked relation Sir Robert Percy, and solicitor Sharpe, might take advantage of the loss of that deed which had never been found since the night of the fire at Percy Hall. It was nearly two years afterwards that Mr Percy received a letter from his cousin, Sir Robert, informing him that he had been advised to dispute the title to the Percy estate, that he had the opinion of the first lawyers in England in his favour, and that he had given directions to his solicitor, Mr Sharpe, to commence a suit to reinstate the lawful heir in the property of his ancestors.—Sir Robert Percy added something

about his reluctance to go to law, and a vast deal about candour, justice, and family friendship, which it would be needless and unreasonable to repeat.

Fresh search was now made for the lost deed, but in vain; and in vain Rosamond reproached herself with having betrayed the secret of that loss to the revengeful attorney.—The ensuing post brought notice from Mr Sharpe that proceedings were commenced.—In Sir Robert's letter, though not in the attorney's, there was obviously left an opening for an offer to compromise; this was done either with intent to lure Mr Percy on to make an offer, which might afterwards appear against him, or it was done in the hope that, intimidated by the fear of an expensive and hazardous suit, Mr Percy might give up half his estate, to secure the quiet possession of the remainder. But they knew little of Mr Percy who argued in this manner: he was neither to be lured nor intimidated from his right—all compromise, "all terms of commerce he disdained." He sent no answer, but prepared to make a vigorous defence. For this purpose he wrote to his son Alfred, desiring him to spare no pains or expence, to engage the best counsel, and to put them in full possession of the cause. Alfred regretted that he was not of sufficient standing at the bar to take the lead in conducting his father's cause: he, however, prepared all the documents with great care and ability. From time to time, as the business went on, he wrote to his father in good spirits, saying that he had excellent hopes they should succeed, notwithstanding the unfortunate loss of the deed; that the more he considered the case, the more clearly the justice of their cause and the solidity of their right appeared. Alas! Alfred showed himself to be but a young lawyer, in depending so much upon right and justice, while a point of law was against him. It is

unnecessary, and would be equally tedious and unintelligible to most readers, to dwell upon the details of this suit. Contrary to the usual complaints of the law's delay, this cause went through the courts in a short time, because Mr Percy did not make use of any subterfuge to protract the business. A decree was given in favour of Sir Robert Percy, and he became the legal possessor of the great Percy estate in Hampshire, which had been so long the object of his machinations.

Thus, at one stroke, the Percy family fell from the station and affluence which they had so long, and, in the opinion of all who knew them, so well enjoyed. Great was the regret among the higher classes, and great, indeed, the lamentations of the poor in the neighbourhood, when the decree was made known. It seemed as if the change in their situation was deplored as a general misfortune, and as if it were felt by all more than by the sufferers themselves, who were never seen to give way to weak complaints, or heard to utter an invective against their adversary. This magnanimity increased the public sympathy, and pity for them was soon converted into indignation against Sir Robert Percy. Naturally insolent, and now elated with success, he wrote post after post to express his impatience to come and take possession of his estate, and to hasten the departure of his relations from the family seat. This was as cruel as it was unnecessary, for from the moment when they learnt the event of the trial, they had been occupied with the preparations for their departure; for the resignation of all the conveniences and luxuries they possessed, all the pleasures associated with the idea of home; for parting with all the animate and inanimate objects to which they had long and early habits of affection and attachment. This family had

never been proud in prosperity, nor were they abject in adversity: they submitted with fortitude to their fate; yet they could not, without regret, leave the place where they had spent so many happy years.

It had been settled that the improvements which Mr Percy had made on the estate, the expence of the buildings and furniture at Percy Hall, of which a valuation had been made, should be taken in lieu of all arrears of rent to which Sir Robert might lay claim. In consequence of this award, Mr Percy and his family were anxious to leave everything about the house and place in perfect order, that they might fulfil punctually their part of the agreement. The evening before they were to quit Percy Hall, they went into every room, to take a review of the whole. The house was peculiarly convenient and well arranged. Mr Percy had spared nothing to render it in every respect agreeable, not only to his guests, but to his family, to make his children happy in their home. His daughters' apartments he had fitted up for them in the neatest manner, and they had taken pleasure in ornamenting them with their own work and drawings. They felt very melancholy the evening they were to take leave of these for ever. They took down some of their drawings, and all the little trophies preserved from childhood, memorials of early ingenuity or taste, which could be of no use or value to any one except to themselves; everything else they agreed to leave as usual, to show how kind their father had been to them—a sentiment well suited to their good and innocent minds. They opened their writing-tables and their drawing-boxes for the last time; for the last time they put fresh flowers into their flower-pots, and, with a sigh, left their little apartments.

All the family then went out to walk in the park and through the shrubberies. It was a delightful

summer's evening; the birds were singing—"Caring little," as Rosamond said, "for our going away." The sun was just setting, and they thought they had never seen the place look so beautiful. Indeed, Mr and Mrs Percy had, for many years, delighted in cultivating the natural beauties of this picturesque situation, and their improvements were now beginning to appear to advantage. But they were never to enjoy the success of their labours! The old steward followed the family in this walk. He stopped every now and then to deplore over each fine tree or shrub as they passed, and could scarcely refrain from bursting into invectives against *him* that was coming after them into possession.

"The whole country cries shame upon the villain," John began; but Mr Percy, with a smile, stopped him.

"Let us bear our misfortunes, John, with a good grace—let us be thankful for the happiness which we have enjoyed, and submit ourselves to the will of Providence. Without any hypocrisy or affected resignation, I say, at this instant, what, with my whole heart, I feel, that I submit, without repining, to the will of God, and firmly believe that all is for the best."

"And so I strive to do," said John. "But only, I say, if it had pleased God to order it otherwise, it's a pity the wicked should come *just* after us to enjoy themselves, when they have robbed us of all."

"Not of all," said Mr Percy.

"What is it they have not robbed us of?" cried John: "not a thing but they must have from us."

"No; the best of all things we keep for ourselves—it cannot be taken from us—a good conscience."

"Worth all the rest—that's true," said John; "and that is what he will never have who is coming

here to-morrow—never—never! They say he don't sleep at nights. But I'll say no more about him, only he's not a good man."

"I am sure, John, you are not a good courtier," said Mrs Percy, smiling: "you ought to prepare to pay your court to your new master."

"*My* new master!" cried John, growing red: "the longest day ever I live, I'll never have a new master! All that I have in the world came from you, and I'll never have another master. Sure you will let me follow you? I will be no trouble: though but little, may be I can do something, still. Surely, madam—surely, sir—young ladies, you'll speak for me—I shall be let to follow the fortunes of the family, and go along with you into *banishment*."

"My good John," said Mr Percy, "since you desire to follow us into *banishment*, as you call it, you shall; and as long as we have anything upon earth, you shall never want. You must stay here to-morrow, after we are gone, to give up possession." (John could not stand this, but turned away to hide his face.) "When your business is done," continued Mr Percy, "you may set out and follow us as soon as you please."

"I thank you, sir, kindly," said John, with a most grateful bow, that took in all the family, "that's new life to me."

He said not a word more during the rest of the walk, except just as he passed near the beach where the ship was wrecked, he exclaimed, "There was the first beginning of all our misfortunes: who would have thought that when we gave them shelter we should be turned out so soon ourselves? 'twas that drunken rascal of a Dutch carpenter was the cause of all!"

The next morning the whole family set out in an open carriage, which had been made for the purpose

of carrying as many of the young people as possible upon excursions of pleasure. It was a large sociable, which they used to call their *caravan*.

At the great gate of the park old John stopped the carriage, and leaning over to his master, whispered, "I beg your pardon, sir, but God bless you, and don't drive through the village: if you please take the back road; for I've just learned that *he* is on the great road, and as near hand as the turn at the school-house, and they say he wants to be driving in his coach and four through the village as you are all going out—now I wouldn't for anything he had that triumph over us."

"Thank you, good John," said Mr Percy, "but such triumphs cannot mortify us."

Poor John reluctantly opened the gate and let the carriage pass—they drove on—they cast a lingering look behind as they quitted the park—

——"Must I then leave thee, Paradise?"——

As they passed through the village the poor people came out of their houses to take leave of their excellent landlord; they flocked round the carriage, and hung upon it till it stopped, and then, with once voice, they poured forth praises, and blessings, and prayers for better days. Just at this moment Sir Robert Percy made his appearance. His equipage was splendid; his coachman drove his four fine horses down the street, the middle of which was cleared in an instant. The crowd gazed at the show as it passed—Sir Robert gave a signal to his coachman to drive slower, that he might longer enjoy the triumph—he put his head out of the coach window, but no one cried, "God bless him!" His insolence was obviously mortified as he passed the Percy family, for Mr Percy bowed with an air of dignity and cheerfulness which seemed to say, "My

fortune is yours—but I am still myself." Some of the spectators clapped their hands, and some wept.

Mr Percy seemed to have prepared his mind for every circumstance of his departure, and to be perfectly composed, or at least master of his feelings; but a small incident, which had not been foreseen, suddenly moved him almost to tears: as they crossed the bridge, which was at the farthest end of the village, they heard the muffled bells of the church toll as if for a public calamity.* Instantly recollecting the resentment to which these poor people were exposing themselves, by this mark of their affection and regret, Mr Percy went by a short path to the church as quickly as possible, and had the bells unmuffled.

Chapter xii.

MR Percy fortunately possessed, independently of the Percy estate, a farm worth about seven or eight hundred a year, which he had purchased with part of his wife's fortune; on which he had built a lodge, that he had intended for the future residence of one of his sons. *The Hills* was the name of this lodge, to which all the family now retired. Though it was in the same county with Percy Hall, Clermont Park, Falconer Court, Hungerford Castle, and within reach of several other gentlemen's seats, yet from its being in a hilly part of the country, through which no regular road had been made, it was little frequented, and gave the idea not only of complete retirement, but of remoteness. Though a lonely situation, it was, however, a beautiful one. The house stood on

* On Mr Morris's departure from Piercefield the same circumstance happened.

the brow of a hill, and looked into a deep glen, through the steep descent of which ran a clear and copious rivulet rolling over a stony bed; the rocks were covered with mountain flowers, and wild shrubs ——But nothing is more tiresome than a picture in prose: we shall, therefore, beg our readers to recall to their imagination some of the views they may have seen in Wales, and they will probably have a better idea of this place than any that we could give by the most laboured description, amplified with all the epithets in the English language.

The house at the Hills, though finished, was yet but scantily furnished, and was so small that it could hardly hold the family, who were now obliged to take refuge in it. However, they were well disposed to accommodate each other: they had habits of order, and had so little accustomed themselves to be waited upon, that this sudden change in their fortune and way of life did not appear terrible, as it would to many in the same rank. Undoubtedly they felt the loss of real conveniences, but they were not tormented with ideal wants, or with the pangs of mortified vanity. Evils they had to bear, but they were not the most dreadful of all evils—those of the imagination.

Mr Percy, to whom his whole family looked for counsel and support, now showed all the energy and decision of his character. What he knew must be done sooner or later he did decidedly at first. The superfluities, to which his family had been accustomed, were instantly abandoned. The great torment of decayed gentry is the remembrance of their former station, and a weak desire still to appear what their fortune no longer allows them to be. This folly Mr Percy had not to combat in his family, where all were eager to resign even more of their own comforts than the occasion required. It was the object now for

the family who were at home to live as frugally as possible, that they might save as much of their small income as they could, to assist and forward the sons in their professions.

The eldest son, Godfrey, could not yet have heard of the change in his father's fortune, and in his own expectations; but from a passage in his last letter, it was evident that he had some idea of the possibility of such a reverse, and that he was preparing himself to live with economy. From Alfred and Erasmus Mr Percy had at this trying time the satisfaction of receiving at once the kindest and the most manly letters, containing strong expressions of gratitude to their father for having given them such an education as would enable them, notwithstanding the loss of hereditary fortune, to become independent and respectable. What would have been the difference of their fate, and of their feelings, had they been suffered to grow up into mere idle lounging gentlemen, or four-in-hand coachmen! In different words, but with the same spirit, both brothers declared that this change in the circumstances of their family did not depress their minds, but, on the contrary, gave them new and powerful motives for exertion. It seemed to be the first wish of their souls to fulfil the fond hopes and predictions of their father, and to make some return for the care their parents had taken of their education.

Their father, pleased by the sanguine hopes and ardent spirit expressed in their letters, was however sensible that a considerable time must elapse before they could make anything by law or medicine. They were as yet only in the outset of their professions, the difficult beginning, when men must toil often without reward, be subject to crosses and losses, and rebukes and rebuffs, when their rivals push them back, and when they want the assistance of friends to help them

forward, whilst with scarcely the means to live they must appear like gentlemen.

Beside the faithful steward, two servants, who were much attached to the family, accompanied them to their retirement. One was Mrs Harte, who had lived with Mrs Percy above thirty years; and who, from being a housekeeper with handsome wages and plenary power over a numerous household at Percy Hall, now served with increased zeal at the Hills, doing a great part of the work of the house herself, with the assistance only of a stout country girl newly hired, whose awkwardness and ignorance, or, as Mrs Harte expressed it, whose *comical ways*, she bore with a patience that cost her more than all the rest. The other servant who followed the altered fortunes of the Percy family was a young man of the name of Johnson, whom Mr Percy had bred up from a boy, and who was so creditable a servant that he could readily have obtained a place with high wages in any opulent family, either in the country or in London; but he chose to abide by his master, who could now only afford to give him very little. Indeed, Mr Percy would not have kept any man-servant in his present circumstances, but out of regard for this young man, who seemed miserable at the thoughts of leaving him, and who undertook to make himself useful in the farm as well as in the house.

Very different was Johnson from the present race of *fine* town servants, who follow with no unequal steps the follies and vices of their *betters;* and who, by their insolence and extravagance, become the just torments of their masters. Very different was Johnson from some country servants, who with gross selfishness look solely to their own eating and drinking, and whose only thought is how to swallow as much and do as little as possible.

As soon as he had settled his home, Mr Percy

looked abroad to a tract of improvable ground, on which he might employ his agricultural skill. He had reason to rejoice in having really led the life of a country gentleman. He understood country business, and he was ably assisted in all the details of farming and management. Never, in the most prosperous days, did the old steward seem so fully interested in his master's affairs, so punctual and active in executing his commands, and, above all, so respectful in his manner to his master, as now in his fallen fortunes.

It would be uninteresting to readers who are not farmers to enter into a detail of Mr Percy's probable improvements. It is enough to say that his hopes were founded upon experience, and that he was a man capable of calculating. He had been long in the habit of keeping accurate accounts, not such as gentlemen display when they are pleased to prove that their farm produces more than ever farm produced before. All the tradesmen with whom he had dealt, were, notwithstanding his change of fortune, ready to trust him; and those who were strangers, finding themselves regularly paid, soon acquired confidence in his punctuality. So that, far from being terrified at having so little, he felt surprised at having still so much money at his command.—The enjoyment of high credit must surely give more pleasurable feelings than the mere possession of wealth.

Often, during the first year after he had been deprived of the Percy estate, Mr Percy declared, that as to himself, he had actually lost nothing; for he had never been expensive or luxurious, his personal enjoyments were nearly the same, and his active pursuits were not very different from what they had always been. He had, it is true, less time than he wished to give to literature, or to indulge in the

company and conversation of his wife and daughters; but even the pain of this privation was compensated by the pleasure he felt in observing the excellencies in their characters which adversity developed.—It has by some persons been thought, that women who have been suffered to acquire literary tastes, whose understandings have been cultivated and refined, are apt to disdain or to become unfit for the useful minutiæ of domestic duties. In the education of her daughters Mrs Percy had guarded against this danger, and she now experienced the happy effects of her prudence. At first they had felt it somewhat irksome, in their change of circumstances, to be forced to spend a considerable portion of their time in preparations for the mere business of living, but they perceived that this constraint gave a new spring to their minds, and a higher relish to their favourite employments. After the domestic business of the day was done, they enjoyed, with fresh delight, the pleasures of which it is not in the power of fortune to deprive us.

Soon after the family were settled at the Hills, they were surprised by a visit from commissioner Falconer —*surprised*, because, though they knew that he had a certain degree of commonplace friendship for them as relations, yet they were aware that his regard was not independent of fortune, and they had never supposed that he would come to seek them in their retirement. After some general expressions of condolence on their losses, their change of situation, and the inconveniences to which a large family, bred up, as they had been, in affluence, must suffer in their present abode, he went out to walk with Mr Percy, and he then began to talk over his own family affairs. With polite acknowledgment to Mr Percy of the advantage he had derived from his introduction to Lord Oldborough, and with modestly implied compliments to his own address in

turning that introduction to the best possible account, Mr Falconer led to the subject on which he wanted to dilate.

"You see, my dear Mr Percy," said he, "without vanity I may now venture to say, my plans for advancing my family have all succeeded; my sons have risen in the world, or rather have been pushed up, beyond my most sanguine hopes."

"I give you joy with all my heart," said Mr Percy.

"But, my good sir, listen to me; your sons might have been in as advantageous situations, if you had not been too proud to profit by the evidently favourable dispositions which Lord Oldborough showed towards you and yours."

"Too proud! No, my friend, I assure you, pride never influenced my conduct—I acted from principle."

"So you are pleased to call it.—But we will not go back to the past—no man likes to acknowledge he has been wrong. Let us, if you please, look to the future. You know that you are now in a different situation from what you were formerly, when you could afford to follow your principles, or your systems. Now, my dear sir, give me leave to tell you that it is your duty, absolutely your duty, to make use of your interest for your sons. There is not a man in England who, if he chose it, might secure for his sons a better patron than you could."

"I trust," replied Mr Percy, "that I have secured for my sons what is better than a good patron—a good education."

"Both are best," said Mr Falconer. "Proud as you are, cousin Percy, you must allow this, when you look round and see who rises, and how.—And now we are by ourselves, let me ask you, frankly and

seriously, why do not you try to establish your sons by patronage?"

"Frankly and seriously, then, because I detest and despise the whole system of patronage."

"That's very *strong*," said Mr Falconer. "And I am glad for your sake, and for the sake of your family, that nobody heard it but myself."

"If the whole world heard me," pursued Mr Percy, "I should say just the same. *Strong*—very strong!—I am glad of it; for (excuse me, you are my relation, and we are on terms of familiarity) the delicate, guarded, qualifying, trimming, mincing, pouncet-box, gentleman-usher mode of speaking truth, makes no sort of impression. Truth should always be strong—speaking or acting."

"Well, well, I beg your pardon; as strong let it be as you please, only let it be cool, and then we cannot fail to understand one another. I think you were going to explain to me why you detest and despise what you call the system of patronage."

"Because I believe it to be ruinous to my country. Whenever the honours of professions, civil, military, or ecclesiastical, are bestowed by favour, not earned by merit—whenever the places of trust and dignity in a state are to be gained by intrigue and solicitation—there is an end of generous emulation, and consequently of exertion. Talents and integrity, in losing their reward of glory, lose their vigour, and often their very existence. If the affairs of this nation were guided, and if her battles were fought, by the corrupt, imbecile creatures of patronage, how would they be guided?—how fought?—Wo be to the country that trusts to such rulers and such defenders! Wo has been to every country that has so trusted!—May such never be the fate of England!—And that it never may, let every honest independent Englishman set his

face, his hand, his heart, against this base, this ruinous system!—I will for one."

"For one!—alas!" said Mr Falconer, with a sigh meant to be heard, and a smile not intended to be seen, "what can one do in such a desperate case?—I am afraid certain things will go on in the world for ever, whether we profit by them or not.—And if I grant that patronage is sometimes a public evil, you must allow that it is often a private benefit."

"I doubt even that," said Mr Percy; "for those young men who are brought up to expect patronage in any profession——But," said Mr Percy, checking himself, "I forgot who I am speaking to: I don't wish to say anything that can hurt your feelings, especially when you are so kind to come to see me in adversity, and when you show so much interest in my affairs."

"Oh! pray go on, go on," said the commissioner, smiling, "you will not hurt me, I assure you: consider, I am too firm in the success of my system to be easily offended on that point—go on!—Those young men who are brought up to expect patronage in any profession——"

"Are apt to depend upon it too much," continued Mr Percy, "and consequently neglect to acquire knowledge. They know that things will be passed over for them, and they think that they need not be assiduous, because they are secure of being provided for, independently of their own exertions; and if they have a turn for extravagance, they may indulge it, because a place will set all to rights."

"And if they are provided for, and if they do get good places, are they not well enough off?" said Mr Falconer: "I'll answer for it, your sons would think so."

Mr Percy, with a look of proud humility, replied,

"I am inclined to believe that my sons would not think themselves *well off*, unless they were distinguished by their own merit."

"To be sure," said Mr Falconer, correcting himself; "of course I mean that too: but a young man can never distinguish himself, you know, so well as when his merit is raised to a conspicuous situation."

"Or disgrace himself so effectually, as when he is raised to a situation for which he is unprepared and unfit."

The commissioner's brow clouded—some unpleasant reflection or apprehension seemed to cross his mind. Mr Percy had no intention of raising any; he meant no allusion to the commissioner's sons—he hastened to turn what he had said more decidedly upon his own.

"I have chosen for my sons, or rather they have chosen for themselves," continued he, "professions which are independent of influence, and in which it could be of little use to them. Patrons can be of little advantage to a lawyer or a physician. No judge, no attorney, can push a lawyer up, beyond a certain point—he may rise like a rocket, but he will fall like the stick, if he be not supported by his own inherent powers. Where property or life is at stake, men will not compliment or even be influenced by great recommendations—they will consult the best lawyer, and the best physician, whoever he may be. I have endeavoured to give my Alfred and Erasmus such an education as shall enable them honestly to work their own way to eminence."

"A friend's helping hand is no bad thing," said Mr Falconer, "in that hard and slippery ascent."

"As many friends, as many helping hands, in a fair way, as you please," said Mr Percy: "I by no means would inculcate the anti-social, absurd, impossible doctrine, that young men, or any men, can or

ought to be independent of the world. Let my sons make friends for themselves, and enjoy the advantage of mine. I object only to their becoming dependent, wasting the best years of their lives in a miserable, debasing servitude to patrons—to patrons, who at last may perhaps capriciously desert them at their utmost need."

Again, without designing it, Mr Percy wakened unpleasant recollections in the mind of the commissioner.

"Ah! there you touch a tender string with me," said Mr Falconer, sighing. "I have known something of that in my life. Lord N—— and Mr G—— did indeed use me shamefully ill. But I was young then, and did not choose my friends well. I know more of the world now, and have done better for my sons—and shall do better, I trust, for myself. In the meantime, my dear Mr Percy, let us think of your affairs. Such a man as you should not be lost here on a farm amongst turnips and carrots. So Lord Oldborough says and thinks: and, in short, to come to the point at once, I was not sounding you from idle curiosity respecting patronage, or from any impertinent desire to interfere with your concerns; but I come, commissioned by Lord Oldborough, to make an offer, which, I am persuaded, whatever theoretical objections might occur," said the commissioner, with a significant smile, "Mr Percy is too much a man of practical sense to reject. Lord Oldborough empowers me to say, that it is his wish to see his Government supported and strengthened by men of Mr Percy's talents and character; that he is persuaded that Mr Percy would speak well in Parliament; that if Mr Percy will join *us*, his lordship will bring him into Parliament, and give him thus an opportunity of at once distinguishing himself, advancing his family,

repairing the injustice of fortune, and serving his country."

Commissioner Falconer made this offer with much pomposity, with the air of a person sure that he is saying something infinitely flattering, and at the same time with a lurking smile on his countenance, at the idea of the ease and certainty with which this offer would induce Mr Percy to recant all he had said against patrons and patronage. He was curious to hear how the philosopher would change his tone; but, to his surprise, Mr Percy did not alter it in the least.

He returned his respectful and grateful acknowledgments to Lord Oldborough, but begged leave totally to decline the honour intended him; he could not, he said, accept it consistently with his principles —he could not go into Parliament with a view to advance himself or to provide for his family.

The commissioner interrupted to *qualify*, for he was afraid he had spoken too broadly, and observed that what he had said was quite confidential.

Mr Percy understood it so, and assured him there was no danger that it should be repeated. The commissioner was then in a state to listen again quietly.

Mr Percy said, that when he was rich, he had preferred domestic happiness to ambition, therefore he had never stood for the county to which he belonged; that now he was poor, he felt an additional reason for keeping out of Parliament, that he might not put himself in a situation to be tempted—a situation where he must spend more than he could afford, and could only pay his expences by selling his conscience.

The commissioner was silent with astonishment for some moments after Mr Percy ceased speaking. He had always thought his good cousin a singular man, but he had never thought him a wrong-headed fool till this moment. At first he was somewhat vexed, for Mr

Percy's sake and for the sake of his sons, that he refused such an offer—for the commissioner had some of the feelings of a relation—but more the habits of a politician, and these last, in a few moments, reconciled him to what he thought the ruin of his cousin's prospects in life. Mr Falconer considered, that if Mr Percy were to go into Parliament to join their party, and to get near Lord Oldborough, he might become a dangerous rival. He pressed the matter, therefore, no longer with urgency, but only just sufficient to enable him to report to Lord Oldborough that he had executed his commission, but had found Mr Percy *impracticable*.

Chapter xiii.

HOWEVER sincere the general pity and esteem for the Percy family, they did not escape the common lot of mortality; they had their share of blame, as well as of condolence, from their friends and acquaintance. Some discovered that all the misfortunes of the family might have been avoided, if they had listened to good advice; others were quite clear that the lawsuit would have been decided in Mr Percy's favour, if he had employed their solicitor or their barrister; or, in short, if every step of the suit had been directed differently.

Commissioner Falconer now joined the band of reproaching friends. He did not blame Mr Percy, however, for the conduct of the lawsuit, for of that he confessed himself to be no judge, but he thought he understood the right way of advancing a family in the world; and on this subject he now took a higher tone than he had formerly felt himself entitled to assume. Success gives such rights—especially over

the unfortunate. The commissioner said loudly in all companies, that he had hoped his relation, Mr Percy, who certainly was a man of talents, and he was convinced well-intentioned, would not have shown himself so obstinately attached to his peculiar opinions—especially to his strange notions of independence, which must disgust, ultimately, friends whom it was most the interest of his family to please; that he doubted not that the young men of the Percy family bitterly regretted that their father would not avail himself of the advantages of his connexions, of the favourable dispositions, and, to his knowledge, most *condescending* offers that had been made to him—offers which, the commissioner said, he must term really condescending, when he considered that Mr Percy had never paid the common court that was expected by a minister. Other circumstances, too, enhanced the favour: offence had undoubtedly been given by the ill-timed, injudicious interference of Captain Godfrey Percy about regimental business—some Major Gascoigne—yet, notwithstanding this, a certain person, whose steadiness in his friendships the commissioner declared he could never sufficiently admire, had not, for the son's errors, changed his favourable opinion or disposition towards the father.

Mr Falconer concluded, with a sigh, "There are some men whom the best of friends cannot serve—and such we can only leave to their fate."

The commissioner now considering Mr Percy as a person so obstinately odd that it was unsafe for a rising man to have anything more to do with him, it was agreed, in the Falconer family, that it was necessary to let the Percys drop—gently, without making any noise. Mrs Falconer and her daughters having always resided in London during the winter, and at some watering-place in summer, knew scarcely anything of the female

part of the Percy family. Mrs Falconer had occasionally met Mrs Percy, but the young ladies, who had not yet been in town, she had never seen since they were children. Mrs Falconer now considered this as a peculiarly fortunate circumstance, because she should not be blamed for *cutting* them, and should escape all the *unpleasantness* of breaking off an intimacy with relations.

The commissioner acceded to all his lady's observations, and easily shook off that attachment, which he had professed for so many years, perhaps felt, for his *good cousin Percy*—perhaps felt, we say: because we really believe that he was attached to Mr Percy while that gentleman was in prosperity. There are persons who have an exclusive sympathy with the prosperous.

There was one, however, who, in this respect, felt differently from the rest of the family. Buckhurst Falconer, with a general impulse of affection and gratitude, declared that he would not desert Mr Percy or any of the family in adversity; he could never forget how kind they had been to him when he was in distress. Buckhurst's resentment against Caroline for her repeated refusals suddenly subsided; his attachment revived with redoubled force. He protested that he loved her the better for having lost her fortune, and he reiterated this protestation more loudly because his father declared it was absurd and ridiculous. The son persisted, till the father, though not subject to make violent resolutions, was wrought to such a pitch as to swear, that if Buckhurst should be fool enough to think seriously of a girl who was now a beggar, he would absolutely refuse his consent to the match, and would never give his son a shilling.

Buckhurst immediately wrote to Caroline a passionate declaration of the constancy and ardour of his attach-

ment, and entreated her permission to wait upon her immediately."

"Do not sacrifice me," said Buckhurst, "to idle niceties. That I have many faults, I am conscious; but none, I trust, for which you ought utterly to condemn me—none but what you can cure. I am ready to be everything which you approve. Give me but leave to hope. There is no sacrifice I will not make to facilitate, to expedite our union. I have been ordained, one living I possess, and that which Colonel Hauton has promised me will soon come into my possession. Believe me, I was decided to go into the Church by my attachment—to my passion for you, every scruple, every consideration gave away. As to the rest, I shall never be deterred from following the dictates of my heart by the opposition of ambitious parents. Caroline, do not sacrifice me to idle niceties—I know I have the misfortune not to please your brother Alfred: to do him justice, he has fairly told me that he does not think me worthy of *his sister Caroline.* I forgive him, I admire him for the pride with which he pronounces the words, *my sister Caroline.* But though she may easily find a more faultless character, she will never find a warmer heart, or one more truly—more ardently attached."

There was something frank, warm, and generous in this letter, which pleased Rosamond, and which, she said, justified her good opinion of Buckhurst. Indeed, the great merit of being ardently attached to her sister Caroline was sufficient, in Rosamond's eyes, to cover a multitude of sins: and the contrast between his warmth at this moment, and the coldness of the rest of his family, struck her forcibly. Rosamond thought that Alfred had been too severe in his judgment, and observed, that it was in vain to look with a lantern all over the world for a faultless character—a monster!

It was quite sufficient if a woman could find an honest man—that she was sure Buckhurst had no faults but what love would cure.

"But love has not cured him of any yet," said Caroline.

"Try marriage," said Rosamond, laughing.

Caroline shook her head. "Consider at what expence that trial must be made."

At the first reading of Buckhurst's letter Caroline had been pleased with it; but on a second perusal, she was dissatisfied with the passage about his parents, nor could she approve of his giving up what he now called his *scruples*, to obtain a competence for the woman he professed to adore. She knew that he had been leading a dissipated life in town; that he must, therefore, be less fit than he formerly was to make a good husband, and still less likely to make a respectable clergyman. He had some right feeling, but no steady principle, as Caroline observed. She was grateful for the constancy of his attachment, and for the generosity he showed in his whole conduct towards her; nor was she insensible to the urgency with which Rosamond pleaded in his favour. But she was firm in her own judgment; and her refusal, though expressed in the terms that could best soften the pain it must give, was as decided as possible.

Soon after her letter had been sent, she and Rosamond had taken a longer walk one evening than usual, and, eager in conversation, went on so far in this wild unfrequented part of the country, that when they saw the sun setting, they began to fear they should not reach home before it was dark. They wished to find a shorter way than that by which they went, and they looked about in hopes of seeing some labourer (some *swinked hedger*) returning from his work, or a cottage where they could meet with a guide.—But there was

no person or house within sight. At last Caroline, who had climbed upon a high bank in the lane where they were walking, saw a smoke rising between some trees at a little distance; and toward this spot they made their way through another lane, the entrance to which had been stopped up with furze bushes. They soon came within sight of a poor-looking cottage, and saw a young woman walking very slowly with a child in her arms. She was going towards the house, and did not perceive the young ladies till they were close to her. She turned suddenly when they spoke—started—looked frightened and confused; the infant began to cry, and hushing it as well as she could, she answered to their questions with a bewildered look, "I don't know indeed—I can't tell—I don't know anything, ladies, ask at the cottage, yonder." Then she quickened her pace, and walked so fast to the house, that they could hardly keep up with her. She pushed open the hatch door, and called "Dorothy! Dorothy, come out." But no Dorothy answered.—The young woman seemed at a loss what to do; and as she stood hesitating, her face, which had at first appeared pale and emaciated, flushed up to her temples. She looked very handsome, but in ill-health.

"Be pleased, ladies," said she, with diffidence, and trembling from head to foot, "be pleased to sit down and rest, ladies. One will be in directly who knows the ways—I am a stranger in these parts."

As soon as she had set the chairs, she was retiring to an inner room, but her child, who was pleased with Caroline's face as she smiled and nodded at him, stretched out his little hands towards her.

"Oh! let my sister give him a kiss," said Rosamond. The mother stopped, yet appeared unwilling. The child patted Caroline's cheek, played with her hair, and laughed aloud. Caroline offered to take the

child in her arms, but the mother held him fast, and escaped into the inner room, where they heard her sobbing violently. Caroline and Rosamond looked at one another in silence, and left the cottage by tacit consent, sorry that they had given pain, and feeling that they had no right to intrude farther. "We can go home the same way that we came," said Caroline, "and that is better than to trouble anybody."

"Certainly," said Rosamond: "yet I should like to know something more about this poor woman if I could, without——If we happened to meet Dorothy, whoever she is."

At this instant they saw an old woman come from a copse near the cottage, with a bundle of sticks on her back and a tin can in her hand: this was Dorothy. She saved them all the trouble and delicacy of asking questions, for there was not a more communicative creature breathing. She in the first place threw down her faggots, and offered her service to guide the young ladies home; she guessed they belonged to the family that was newly come to settle at the Hills, which she described, though she could not tell the name. She would not be denied the pleasure of showing them the shortest and safest way, and the only way by which they could get home before it was nightfall. So they accepted her kind offer, and she trudged on, talking as she went.

"It is a weary thing, ladies, to live in this lone place, where one does not see a soul to speak to from one month's end to another—especially to me that has lived afore now in my younger days in Lon'on. But it's as God pleases! and I wish none had greater troubles in this world than I——You were up at the house, ladies? There within at my little place—ay—then you saw the greatest and the only great trouble I have, or ever had in this life.—Did not you, ladies,

see the young woman with the child in her arms? —But maybe you did not mind Kate, and she's nothing now to look at, quite faded and gone, though she's only one month past nineteen years of age. I am sure I ought to know, for I was at her christening, and nursed her mother. She's of very good parentage, that is, of a farmer's family, that *has*, as well as his neighbours, that lives a great way off, quite on the other side of the country. And not a year, at least not a year and a half ago, I remember Kate Robinson dancing on the green at Squire Burton's there with the rest of the girls of the village, and without compare the prettiest and freshest, and most blithsome and innocent of them all. Ay, she was innocent then, none ever more so, and she had no care, but all looking kind upon her in this world, and fond parents taking pride in her—and now look at her what she is! Cast off by all, shamed, and forgotten, and broken-hearted, and lost as much as if she was in her grave. And better she was in her grave than as she is."

The old woman now really felt so much that she stopped speaking, and she was silent for several minutes.

"Ah! dear ladies," said she, looking up at Rosamond and Caroline, "I see you have kind hearts within you, and I thank you for pitying poor Kate."

"I wish we could do anything to serve her," said Caroline.

"Ah! miss, that I am afraid you can't—that's what I am afraid none can now." The good woman paused and looked as if she expected to be questioned. Caroline was silent, and the old woman looked disappointed.

"We do not like to question you," said Rosamond, "lest we should ask what you might not like to answer,

or what the young woman would be sorry that you should answer."

"Why, miss, that's very considerate in you, and only that I know it would be for her benefit, I am sure I would not have said a word—but here I have so very little to give her, and that little so coarse fare to what she been used to, both when she was at service, and when she was with her own people, that I be afraid, weak as she be grown now, she won't do. And though I have been a good nurse in my day, I think she wants now a bit better doctor than I be—and then if she could see the minister, to take the weight off her heart, to make her not fret so, to bid her look up above for comfort, and to raise her with the hope and trust that God will have more mercy upon her than her father and mother do have; and to make her—hardest of all!—forget him that has forsaken her and her little one, and been so cruel ——Oh! ladies, to do all that, needs a person that can speak to her better and with more authority than I can."

The poor woman stopped again for some minutes, and then recollecting that she had not told what she had intended to tell, she said, "I suppose, ladies, you guess now how it be, and I ought to beg pardon for speaking of such a thing, or such a one, as—as poor Kate is now, to you, young ladies; but though she is fallen so low, and an outcast, she is not hardened; and if it had been so that it had pleased Heaven that she had been a wife to one in her own condition—Oh! what a wife, and what a mother there was lost in her! The man that wronged her has a deal to answer for. But he has no thought of that, nor care for her, or his child; but he is a fine man about Lon'on, they say, driving about with colonels, and lords, and dancing with ladies. Oh! if

they saw Kate, one would guess they would not think so much of him; but yet, may be, they'd think more —there's no saying how the quality ladies judge on these matters. But this I know, that though he was very free of his money, and generous to Kate at the first, and even for some months after he quit the country, till I suppose he forgot her, yet he has not sent her a guinea for self or child these four months, nor a line of a letter of any kind, which she pined for more, and we kept thinking the letters she did write did not get to him by the post, so we sent one by a grandson of my own, that we knowed would put the letter safe into his hands, and did, just as the young gentleman was, as my grandson told me, coming out of a fine house in Lon'on, and going, with a long whip in his hand, to get upon the coach-box of a coach, with four horses too—and he looks at the letter, and puts it in his pocket, and calls to my boy, 'No answer now, my good friend—but I'll write by post to her.' Those were the very words; and then that colonel that was with him, laughing and making game like, went to snatch the letter out of the pocket, saying, 'Show us that love-letter, Buckhurst——' Lord forgive me! What have I done now?" said the old woman, stopping short, struck by the sudden change in the countenance of both her auditors.

"Mr Buckhurst Falconer is a relation of ours," said Rosamond.

"Dear ladies, how could I think you knew him even?" interrupted the old woman. "I beg your pardon. Kate says he's not so cruel as he seems, and that if he were here this minute, he'd be as kind and generous to her as ever.—It's all forgetfulness just, and giddiness, she says—or, may be, as to the money, that he has not it to spare."

"To spare!" repeated Caroline indignantly.

"Lord love her! what a colour she has now—and what a spirit spoke there! But, ladies, I'd be sorry to hurt the young gentleman; for Kate would be angry at me for that worse than at anything. And as to all that has happened, you know it's nothing extraordinary, but what happens every day, by all accounts; and young gentlemen, such as he be, thinks nothing of it; and the great ladies, I know, by what I noticed when I was in sarvice once in Lon'on myself, the great ladies thinks the better of them for such things."

"I am not a great lady," said Caroline.

"Nor I, thank God!" said Rosamond.

"Well, for certain, if you are not great, you're good ladies," said the old woman.

As they were now within sight of their own house, they thanked and dismissed their loquacious but kind-hearted guide, putting into her hand some money for poor Kate, Caroline promising to make further inquiries — Rosamond, without restriction, promising all manner of assistance, pecuniary, medical, and spiritual.

The result of the inquiries that were made confirmed the truth of all that old Dorothy had related, and brought to light other circumstances relative to the seduction and desertion of this poor girl, which so shocked Rosamond, that in proportion to her former prepossession in Buckhurst's favour was now her abhorrence; and as if to repair the imprudence with which she had formerly used her influence over her sister's mind in his favour, she now went as far on the opposite side, abjuring him with the strongest expressions of indignation, and wishing that Caroline's last letter had not gone to Buckhurst, that she might have given her refusal on this special account, in the most severe and indignant terms the English language could supply.

Mrs Percy, however, on the contrary, rejoiced that Caroline's letter had been sent before they knew anything of this affair.

"But, ma'am," cried Rosamond, "surely it would have been right for Caroline to have given this reason for her refusal, and to have declared that this had proved to her beyond a possibility of doubt that her former objections to Mr Buckhurst Falconer's principles were too well founded; and it would have become Caroline to have written with strong indignation. I am persuaded," continued Rosamond, "that if women would reprobate young men for such instances of profligacy and cruelty, instead of suffering such conduct to go under the fine plausible general names of gallantry and *wildness*, it would make a greater impression than all the sermons that could be preached. And Caroline, who has beauty and eloquence, *can* do this with effect. I remember Godfrey once said, that the peculiar characteristic of Caroline, that in which she differed most from the common herd of young ladies, is in her power of feeling and expressing virtuous indignation. I am sure that Godfrey, partial as he is to Mr Buckhurst Falconer, would think that Caroline ought, on such an occasion, to set an example of that proper spirit, which, superior to the fear of ridicule and fashion, dares to speak the indignation it feels."

"Very well spoken, and better felt, my dear daughter," said Mrs Percy. "And Heaven forbid I should lower the tone of your mind, or your honest indignation against vice; but, Rosamond, my dear, let us be just.—I must do even those, whom Godfrey calls the common herd of young ladies, the justice to believe that there are many among them who have good feeling enough to be angry, very angry, with a lover upon *such an occasion*—angry enough to write him a most indignant, and, perhaps, very eloquent letter.—You may recollect

more than one heroine of a novel, who discards a lover upon such a discovery as was made by you last night. It is a common novel incident, and, of course, from novels, every young lady, even, who might not have *felt* without a precedent, knows how she ought to express herself in such circumstances. But you will observe, my dear, that both in novels and in real life, young ladies generally like and encourage men of feeling in contradistinction to men of principle, and too often men of gallantry in preference to men of correct morals: in short, that such a character as that of Mr Buckhurst Falconer is just the kind of person with whom many women would fall in love. By suffering this to be thought the taste of our sex, ladies encourage libertinism in general, more than they can possibly discourage it by the loudest display of indignation against particular instances.—If, like your sister Caroline, young ladies would show that they really do not prefer such men, it would do essential service. And observe, my dear Rosamond, this can be done by every young woman with perfect delicacy: but I do not see how she can, with propriety or good effect, do more. It is a subject ladies cannot well discuss; a subject upon which the manners and customs of the world are so much at variance with religion and morality, that entering upon the discussion would lead to greater difficulties than you are aware of. It is, therefore, best for our sex to show their disapprobation of vice, and to prove their sense of virtue and religion by their conduct, rather than to proclaim it to the world in words. Had Caroline in her letter expressed her indignation in the most severe terms that the English language could supply, she would only have exposed herself to the ridicule of Mr Buckhurst Falconer's fashionable companions, as a prating, preaching prude, without doing the least good to him, or to any one living."

Rosamond reluctantly acknowledged that perhaps her mother was right.

"But, Caroline, how quietly you sit by, while we are talking of you and your lover!" cried Rosamond; "I do not know whether to be provoked with you, or to admire you."

"Admire me, pray," said Caroline, "if you can."

"I do not believe you will ever be in love," said Rosamond. "I confess I should admire, or, at least, love you better, if you had more feeling," added Rosamond hastily.

"By what do you judge that I want feeling?" said Caroline, colouring deeply, and with a look and tone that expressed her keen sense of injustice. "What proof have I ever given you of my want of feeling?"

"No proof, that I can recollect," said Rosamond, laughing, "no proof, but that you have never been in love."

"Is it a proof I am incapable of feeling, that I have not been in love with one who has proved himself utterly unworthy of my esteem—against whose conduct my sister cannot find words sufficiently severe to express her indignation? Rosamond, my mind inclined towards him at the first reading of his last letter; but if I had ever given him any encouragement, if I had loved him, what would be my misery at this moment!"

"Ah! my dear, but then if you had been very miserable, I should have pitied you so much, and loved you so heartily for being in love," said Rosamond, still laughing.

"Oh! Rosamond," continued Caroline, whose mind was now too highly wrought for raillery, "is love to be trifled with? No, only by trifling minds or by rash characters, by those who do not conceive

its power—its danger. Recollect what we have just seen: a young beautiful woman sinking into the grave with shame—deserted by her parents—wishing her child unborn. Do you remember her look of agony when we praised that child? the strongest charm of nature reversed—the strongest ties dissolved; and love brought her to this! She is only a poor servant-girl. But the highest and the fairest, those of the most cultivated understandings, of the tenderest hearts, cannot love bring them down to the same level—to the same fate?—And not only our weak sex, but over the stronger sex, and the strongest of the strong, and the wisest of the wise, what is, what has ever been the power, the delusions of that passion, which can cast a spell over the greatest hero, throw a blot on the brightest glory, blast in a moment a life of fame!—What must be the power of that passion, which can inspire genius in the dullest and the coldest, waken heroism in the most timid of creatures, exalt to the highest point, or to the lowest degrade our nature—the bitterest curse, or the sweetest blessing Heaven bestows on us in this life!—Oh! sister, is love to be trifled with?"

Caroline paused, and Rosamond, for some instants, looked at her and at her mother in silence; then exclaimed, "All this from Caroline! Are not you astonished, mother?"

"No," said Mrs Percy; "I was aware that this was in Caroline's mind."

"I was not," said Rosamond. "She who never spoke of love!—I little imagined that she thought of it so highly, so seriously."

"Yes, I do think of it seriously, highly may Heaven grant!" cried Caroline, looking fervently upwards as she spoke with an illuminated countenance. "May Heaven grant that love be a blessing and not a curse

to me! Heaven grant that I may never, in any moment of selfish vanity, try to excite a passion which I cannot return! Heaven grant that I never may feel the passion of love but for one whom I shall entirely esteem, who shall be worthy to fill my whole soul!"

"Mother," continued Caroline, turning eagerly, and seizing her mother's hand, "my guide, my guardian, whenever you see me in any, the slightest inclination to coquetry, warn me—as you wish to save me from that which I should most dread, the reproaches of my own conscience—in the first, the very first instance, reprove me, mother, if you can—with severity. And you, my sister, my bosom friend, do not use your influence to soften, to open my mind to love; but if ever you perceive me yielding my heart to the first tenderness of the passion, watch over me, if the object be not every way worthy of me, my equal, my superior.—Oh! as you would wish to snatch me from the grave, rouse me from the delusion—save me from disappointment, regret, remorse, which I know that I could not bear, and live."

Her mother, into whose arms she threw herself, pressed Caroline close to her heart, while Rosamond, to whom she had given her hand, held it fast, and stood motionless between surprise and sympathy. Caroline, to whose usual manners and disposition everything theatrical or romantic was so foreign, seemed, as soon as she recollected herself, to be ashamed of the excessive emotion and enthusiasm she had shown; withdrawing her hand from her sister, she turned away, and left the room.

Her mother and sister both remained silent for a considerable time, fully occupied with their own thoughts and feelings. The mother's reverie looked to the future prospects of her daughter;—confident

in Caroline's character, yet uncertain of her fate, she felt a pleasing yet painful solicitude.

Rosamond's thoughts turned rather to the past than to the future: she recollected and compared words and looks, yet found insuperable difficulty in connecting all she had ever before known or fancied of Caroline with what she had just seen and heard. Rosamond did not fairly recover from her surprise, and from her look of perplexity, during a full hour that she remained absolutely silent, poring upon a screen, upon which she saw nothing.

She then went in search of Caroline, in hopes of renewing the conversation: but she found her busied in some of the common affairs of life, and apparently a different person.

Rosamond, though she made divers attempts, could not lead Caroline back again to the same train of thought, or tone of expression. Indeed, Rosamond did not attempt it very skilfully, but rather with the awkward impatience of one not accustomed to use address. Caroline, intent upon the means of assisting the poor young woman whom they had seen at the cottage, went there again as soon as she could, to warn old Dorothy, in the first place, to be less communicative, and not on any account to mention to any one else the names and circumstances which she had told them with so little reserve. Caroline next applied to Dr Leicester, the vicar of their former parish, a most amiable and respectable clergyman, who had come from his vicarage, near Percy Hall, to spend what time he could spare from his duties with his favourite parishioners; at Caroline's request he willingly went to see this unhappy young woman, and succeeded in his endeavours to soothe and tranquillize her mind by speaking to her words of peace. His mild piety raised and comforted the trembling penitent; and while all

prospect of forgiveness from her parents, or of happiness in this world, was at an end, he fixed her thoughts on those better hopes and promises which religion only can afford. Her health appeared suddenly to mend when her mind was more at ease: but this was only transient, and Dr Percy, to whom Caroline applied for his medical opinion, gave little hopes of her recovery. All that could be done by medicine and proper kindness to assuage her sufferings during her decline was done in the best manner by Mrs Percy and her daughters, especially by Caroline: the young woman, nevertheless, died in six weeks, and was buried without Buckhurst Falconer's making any inquiry concerning her, probably without his knowing of her death. A few days after she was no more, a letter came to her from him, which was returned unopened by Dorothy, who could just write well enough to make these words intelligible in the cover:

"Sir,

"Kate Robinson is dead—this four days—your child is with me still, and well.—She bids me tell you, if ever you asked more concerning her—she left you her forgiveness on her deathbed, and hopes you will be happy, sir.—

"Your humble servant,
"Dorothy White."

A bank note of ten pounds was received by Dorothy soon afterwards for the use of the child, and deep regret was expressed by the father for the death of its mother. But, as Dorothy said, "that came too late to be of any good to her."

Chapter xiv.

SOON after the death of poor Kate, the attention of the Percy family was taken up by a succession of different visits; some from their old neighbours and really affectionate friends, some from among the band of reproaching condolers. The first we shall mention, who partook of the nature of both these classes, was Lady Jane Granville: she was a sincere and warm friend, but a tormenting family adviser and director.

Her ladyship was nearly related to Mr Percy, which gave her, on this occasion, rights of which she knew how to avail herself.

To do her justice, she was better qualified to be an adviser and protector than many who assume a familiar tone and character.

Lady Jane Granville was of high birth and fortune, had always lived in good company, had seen a great deal of the world, both abroad and at home; she had a complete knowledge of all that makes people well received in society, had generalised her observations, and had formed them into maxims of prudence and politeness, which redounded the more to her credit in conversation, as they were never committed to writing, and could, therefore, never be brought to the dangerous test of being printed and published. Her ladyship valued her own traditional wisdom, and oral instruction, beyond anything that can be learned from books. She had acquired a *tact*, which, disclaiming and disdaining every regular process of reasoning, led her with admirable certainty to right conclusions in her own concerns, and thus in some degree justified the peremptory tone she assumed in advising others.

Though by no means pleased with Mr and Mrs

Percy's answers to several of her letters of counsel, yet she thought it her duty, as a friend and relation, to persevere. She invited herself to the Hills, where, with great difficulty, through scarcely practicable cross roads, she arrived. She was so much fatigued and exhausted, in body and mind, that during the first evening she could talk of nothing but her hairbreadth escapes. The next morning, after breakfast, she began with, "My dear Mr Percy, now I have a moment's ease, I have a thousand things to say to you. I am very much surprised that you have thought fit to settle here quite out of the world. Will you give me leave to speak my mind freely to you on the subject?"

"As freely as you please, my dear Lady Jane, upon any subject, if you will only promise not to be offended, if we should not coincide in opinion."

"Certainly, certainly; I am sure I never expect or wish anybody to submit to my opinion, though I have had opportunities of seeing something of the world: but I assure you, that nothing but very particular regard would induce me to offer my advice. It is a maxim of mine, that family interference begins in ill-breeding and ends in impertinence, and accordingly it is a thing I have ever peculiarly avoided. But with a particular friend and near relation like you, my dear Mr Percy, I think there ought to be an exception. Now, my dear sir, the young people have just left the room—I can take this opportunity of speaking freely: your daughters—what will you do with them?"

"Do with them? I beg pardon for repeating your ladyship's words, but I don't precisely understand your question."

"Well, precise sir, then, in other words, how do you mean to dispose of them?"

"I don't mean to dispose of them at all," said Mr Percy.

"Then let me tell you, my good friend," said Lady Jane, with a most prophetic tone, "let me tell you, that you will live to repent that.—You know I have seen something of the world—you ought to bring them forward, and make the most of their birth, family, and connexions, put them in a way of showing their accomplishments, make proper acquaintance, and obtain for your girls what I call the patronage of fashion."

"Patronage!" repeated Mr Percy: "it seems to be my doom to hear of nothing but patronage, whichever way I turn. What! patronage for my daughters as well as for my sons!"

"Yes," said Lady Jane, "and look to it; for your daughters will never go on without it. Upon their first coming out, you should——" Here her ladyship stopped short, for Caroline and Rosamond returned. "Oh! go on, go on, let me beg of your ladyship," said Mr Percy: "why should not my daughters have the advantage of hearing what you are saying?"

"Well, then, I will tell them candidly that upon their first *coming out*, it will be an inconceivable advantage, whatever you may think of it, to have the patronage of fashion! Every day, we see many an ugly face, many a mere simpleton, many a girl who had nothing upon earth but her dress, become quite charming, when the radiance of fashion is upon them. And there are some people who can throw this radiance where and on whom they please; just as easily," said Lady Jane, playing with a spoon she held in her hand, "just as easily as I throw the sunshine now upon this object and now upon that, now upon Caroline and now upon Rosamond. And, observe, no eye turns upon the beauteous Caroline now, because she is left in the shade."

It was Mr Percy's policy to allow Lady Jane full

liberty to finish all she wished to say without interruption; for when people are interrupted, they imagine they have much more to add. Let them go on, and they come to the end of their sense, and even of their words, sooner than they or you could probably expect.

"Now," continued her ladyship, "to apply to living examples; you know Mrs Paul Cotterel?"

"No."

"Well!—Lady Peppercorn?"

"No."

"Nor the Miss Blissets?"

"No."

"That is the misfortune of living so much out of the world!—But there are the Falconers, we all know them at least—now look at the Miss Falconers."

"Alas! we have not the honour of knowing even the Miss Falconers," said Mr Percy, "though they are our cousins."

"Is it possible that you don't know the Miss Falconers?"

"Very possible," replied Mr Percy: "they live always in town, and we have never seen them since they were children: except a visit or two which passed between us just after Mrs Falconer's marriage, we know nothing even of her, though we are all acquainted with the commissioner, who comes from time to time to this part of the country."

"A very clever man is the commissioner in his way," said Lady Jane, "but nothing to his wife. I can assure you, Mrs Falconer is particularly well worth your cultivating; for unless maternal rivalship should interfere, I know few people in the world who could be more useful to your girls when you *bring them out*. She has a vast deal of address. And for a proof, as I was going to point out to you, there are the Miss Falconers in the first circles—asked every-

where—yet without fortunes, and with no pretensions beyond, or equal to, what your daughters have—not with half Rosamond's wit and information—nothing comparable in point of beauty and accomplishments to Caroline; yet how they have *got on!* See what fashion can do! Come, come, we must court her patronage—leave that to me: I assure you I understand the ways and means."

"I have no doubt of that," said Mr Percy. "All that your ladyship has said is excellent sense, and incontrovertible as far as——"

"Oh! I knew you would think so: I knew we should understand one another as soon as you had heard all I had to say."

"Excellent sense, and incontrovertible, as far as it relates to the means, but perhaps we may not agree as to the ends; and if these are different, you know your means, though the best adapted for gaining your objects, may be quite useless or unfit for the attainment of mine."

"At once, then, we can't differ as to our objects, for it is my object to see your daughters happily married; now tell me," said Lady Jane, appealing alternately to Mr and Mrs Percy, "honestly tell me, is not this your object—and yours?"

"Honestly, it is," said Mr and Mrs Percy.

"That's right—I knew we must agree there."

"But," said Mrs Percy, "allow me to ask what you mean by happily married?"

"What do I mean? Just what you mean—what everybody means at the bottom of their hearts: in the first place, married to men who have some fortune."

"What does your ladyship mean by *some* fortune?"

"Why——you have such a strange way of not understanding! We who live in the world must speak as the world speaks—we cannot recur continually to

a philosophical dictionary, and if we had recourse to it, we should only be sent from *a* to *z*, and from *z* back again to *a*; see *affluence*, see *competence*, see *luxury*, see *philosophy*, and see at last that you see nothing, and that you knew as much before you opened the book as when you shut it—which indeed is what I find to be the case with most books I read."

Triumphant from the consciousness of having hitherto had all the wit on her side, Lady Jane looked round, and continued: "Though I don't pretend to draw my maxims from books, yet this much I do know, that in matrimony, let people have ever so much sense, and merit, and love, and all that, they must have bread and butter into the bargain, or it won't do."

"Certainly," said Mrs Percy: "under that head I suppose you include all the necessaries of life."

"And some of the luxuries, if you please; for in these days luxuries are become necessaries."

"A barouche and four, for instance?" said Mrs Percy.

"Oh! no, no—my dear madam, I speak within bounds; you cannot expect a barouche and four for girls who have nothing."

"I expect it as little as I wish it for them," said Mrs Percy, smiling; "and as little as my daughters, I believe, desire it."

"But if such a thing should offer, I presume you would not wish that Rosamond or Caroline should refuse?"

"That depends upon *who* offers it," said Mrs Percy. "But whatever my wishes might be, I should, as I believe I safely may, leave my daughters entirely at liberty to judge and decide for themselves."

"Yes, I believe you safely may," said Lady Jane, "as long as you keep them here. You might as well talk of leaving them at liberty in the deserts of Arabia.

You don't expect that knights and squires should come hither in quest of your damsels?"

"Then you would have the damsels sally forth in quest of the knights and squires?" said Mr Percy.

"Let them sally forth, at any rate," said Lady Jane, laughing; "nobody has a right to ask in quest of what. We are not now in the times of ancient romance, when young ladies were to sit strait-laced at their looms, or never to stir farther than to their bower windows."

"Young ladies must now go a great deal farther," said Mr Percy, "before the discourteous knights will deign to take any notice of them."

"Ay, indeed, it is shameful!" said Lady Jane, sighing. "I declare it is shameful!" repeated she indignantly. "Do you know, that last winter at Bath the ladies were forced to ask the gentlemen to dance?"

"Forced?" said Mr Percy.

"Yes, forced!" said Lady Jane, "or else they must have sat still all night like so many simpletons."

"Sad alternative!" said Mr Percy; "and what is worse, I understand that partners for life are scarcely to be had on easier terms; at least so I am informed by one of your excellent modern mothers, Mrs Chatterton, who has been leading her three *gawky* graces about from one watering-place to another these six years, fishing, and hunting, and hawking for husbands. 'There now! I have carried my girls to Bath and to London, and to Tunbridge, and to Weymouth, and to Cheltenham, and everywhere; I am sure I can do no more for them.' I assure you," continued Mr Percy, "I have heard Mrs Chatterton say these very words in a room full of company."

"In a room full of company? Shocking!" said Lady Jane. "But then poor Mrs Chatterton is a

fool, you know; and, what is worse, not *well-mannered*—how should she? But I flatter myself, if you will trust me with your daughter Caroline, we should manage matters rather better. Now let me tell you my plan. My plan is to take Caroline with me immediately to Tunbridge, previous to her London campaign. Nothing can be a greater mistake than to keep a young lady *up*, and prevent her being seen till the moment when she is to be brought out: it is of incalculable advantage that, previous to her appearance in the great world, she should have been seen by certain fashionable *prôneurs*. It is essential that certain reports respecting her accomplishments and connexions should have had time to circulate properly."

All this Mr and Mrs Percy acknowledged, in as unqualified a manner as Lady Jane could desire, was fit and necessary to secure what is called a young lady's success in the fashionable world; but they said that it was not their object to *dispose of their daughters*, as it is called, *to the best advantage*. The arts which are commonly practised for this purpose they thought not only indelicate but ultimately impolitic and absurd; for men in general are now so well aware of them, that they avoid the snares, and ridicule and detest those by whom they are contrived. If, now and then, a dupe be found, still the chance is, that the match so made turns out unhappily; at best attachments formed in public places, and in the hurry of a town life, can seldom be founded on any real knowledge of character, or suitableness of taste and temper. "It is much more probable," added Mrs Percy, "that happy marriages should be made where people have leisure and opportunities of becoming really and intimately acquainted with each other's dispositions."

"Vastly well!" said Lady Jane: "so you mean to bury your daughters in the country—to shut them up, at least—all the days of their unfortunate lives?"

Mr and Mrs Percy, both at the same moment, eagerly declared that they had no such absurd or cruel intention towards their daughters. "On the contrary," said Mr Percy, "we shall take every proper occasion, that our present fortune and situation will allow, of letting them see agreeable and sensible persons."

"Are they to spring out of the ground, these agreeable and sensible persons?" said Lady Jane. "Whom do you see in this desert, or expect to see?"

"We see your ladyship, in the first place," said Mr Percy: "you cannot, therefore, wonder if we are proud enough to expect to see sometimes good company, persons of merit, and even of fashion, though we have lost our station and fortune."

"That is very politely turned by you, Mr Percy. Much more polite than my desert. But I could not bear the thoughts of your sweet pretty Caroline's blushing unseen."

"Nor could we," said Mr Percy, "bear the thoughts of her ceasing to blush from being too much seen. We could not bear the thoughts of *fitting our daughters out*, and sending them to the London market, with the portionless class of matrimonial adventurers, of whom even the few that succeed are often doomed but to splendid misery in marriage; and the numbers who fail in their venture are, after a certain time, consigned to neglect and contempt in single wretchedness. Here, on the contrary, in the bosom of their own families, without seeking to entice or entrap, they can at all events never be disappointed or degraded; and, whether married or single, will be respected and respectable, in youth and age—secure of friends, and of a happy home."

"Happy nonsense! begging your pardon, my dear coz. Shall I tell you what the end of all this living in the bosom of their own families will be?—that they will die old maids. For mercy's sake, my dear Mrs Percy, do not let Mr Percy be philosophical for your daughters, whatever he may be for himself. You, I am sure, cannot wish your poor daughters to be *old maids*," said her ladyship, with a tremendous accent upon the word.

"No, I should wish them to marry, if I could ensure for them good husbands, not merely good fortunes. The warmest wish of my heart," cried Mrs Percy, "is to see my daughters as happy as I am myself, married to men of their own choice, whom they can entirely esteem, and fondly love. But I would rather see my daughters in their graves than see them throw themselves away upon men unworthy of them, or sell themselves to husbands unsuited to them, merely for the sake of being *established*, for the vulgar notion of *getting married*, or to avoid the imaginary and unjust ridicule of being old maids."

The warmth and energy with which these last words were spoken, by so gentle a person as Mrs Percy, surprised Lady Jane so much, that she was silent: all her ideas being suddenly at a stand, and her sagacity at fault. Mr Percy proposed a walk to show her the Hills; as her ladyship rose to accompany him, she said to herself, "Who could have guessed that Mrs Percy was so romantic?—But she has caught it from her husband.—What a strange father and mother!—But for the sake of the poor girls, I will not give up the point. I will have Caroline with me to Tunbridge, and to town, in spite of their wise heads."

She renewed her attack in the evening after tea. Rising, and walking towards the window, "A word with you, Mr Percy, if you please. The young people

are going to walk, and now we can talk the matter over by ourselves."

"Why should not we talk it over before the young people?" said Mr Percy. "We always speak of everything openly in this family," continued he, turning to Lady Jane; "and I think that is one reason why we live so happily together. I let my children know all my views for them, all my affairs, and my opinions, I may say all my thoughts, or how could I expect them to trust me with theirs?"

"As to that, children are bound by gratitude to treat their parents with perfect openness," said Lady Jane; "and it is the duty of children, you know, to make their parents their confidants upon all occasions."

"Duty and gratitude are excellent things," said Mr Percy, "but somewhat more is necessary between parent and child to produce friendship. Recollect the Duc d'Epernon's reply to his king, who reproached him with want of affection. 'Sire, you may command my services, my life, but your majesty knows, friendship is to be won only by friendship.'"

"Very true," said Lady Jane; "but friendship is not, properly speaking, the connexion that subsists between parents and children."

"I am sorry you think so," said Mr Percy, smiling: "pray do not teach my children that doctrine."

"Nay," said Lady Jane, "no matter whether we call it friendship or not; I will answer for it, that without any refined notions about perfect openness and confidence, your children will be fond of you, if you are indulgent to them in certain points. Caroline, my dear," said she, turning to Caroline, who was at the farthest end of the room, "don't look so unconscious, for you are a party concerned; so come and

kneel at the feet of this perverse father of yours, to plead your cause and mine—I must take you with me to Tunbridge. You must let me have her a summer and winter, and I will answer for Caroline's success."

"What does your ladyship mean by my success?" said Caroline.

"Why, child—Now don't play your father's philosophic airs upon me! We people who live in the world, and not with philosophers, are not prepared for such entrapping interrogatories. But come, I mean in plain English, my dear, though I am afraid it will shock your ears, that you will be" (speaking loud) "pretty well admired, pretty well abused, and—oh! shocking!—pretty well married."

"Pretty well married!" repeated Mrs Percy, in a scornful tone: "but neither Caroline nor I should be satisfied unless she be very well married."

"Heyday! There is no knowing where to have you *lady* philosophers. This morning you did not desire a coach and four for your daughters, not you; now you quarrel with me on the other side of the question. Really, for a lady of moderation, you are a little exorbitant. *Pretty well married*, you know, implies £2000 a year: and *very well married*, nothing under £10,000."

"Is that the language of the market? I did not understand the exact meaning of *very well married*—did you, Caroline? I own I expect something more than £10,000 a year."

"More—you unconscionable wretch! how much more?" said Lady Jane.

"Infinitely more," said Mr Percy: "I expect a man of sense, temper, and virtue, who would love my daughter as she deserves to be loved."

"Let me advise you," said Lady Jane, in her very gravest tone, "not to puff up Caroline's imagination

with a parcel of romantic notions.—I never yet knew any good done by it. Depend on it you will be disappointed, if you expect a genius to descend from the clouds express for your daughters. Let them do as other people do, and they may have a chance of meeting with some good sort of men, who will make them as happy as—as happy as their neighbours."

"And how happy is that?" said Caroline: "as happy as we are now?"

"As you are now!" said Lady Jane: "a vastly pretty maidenly speech! But young ladies, nevertheless, usually think that the saffron robe of Hymen would not be the most unbecoming dress in the world; and whether it be in compliance with their daughters' taste, or their own convenience, most parents are in a hurry to purchase it."

"Sometimes at the expence of their daughters' happiness for life," said Mrs Percy.

"Well, lest we should go over the same ground, and get into the same labyrinth, where we lost ourselves this morning, let me come to the point at once. —May I hope, Mr and Mrs Percy, to have the pleasure of Caroline's company at Tunbridge next week, and in town next winter, or not?—That is the question."

"That is a question which your ladyship will be so good as to ask Caroline, if you please," said Mr Percy; "both her mother and I wish that she should decide for herself."

"Indeed!" cried Lady Jane: "then, my dear Caroline, if you please, come with me this minute to my dressing-room, and we'll settle it all at my *toilette de nuit*. I have a notion," added her ladyship, as she drew Caroline's arm within hers, and led her out of the room, "I have a notion that I shall not find you quite so impracticable as your father has shown himself."

"You may leave us, Keppel," said Lady Jane to her maid, as she went into her dressing-room—"I will ring when I want you.—My love," said she to Caroline, who stood beside her dressing-table, "why did not you let Keppel dress your hair to-day?—But no matter—when I once get you to town, we'll manage it all our own way. I have a notion that you are not of a positive temper."

Caroline coloured at this speech.

"I see what you are thinking of," said Lady Jane, mistaking her countenance; "and to tell you the truth, I also am sadly afraid, by what I see, that we shall hardly gain our point. I know your father—some difficulty will be started, and ten to one he will not allow me to have you at last, unless you try and persuade him yourself."

"I never try to persuade my father to do anything."

"What, then, he is not a man to be persuaded?"

"No," said Caroline, smiling; "but what is much better, he is a man to be convinced."

"Better!" exclaimed Lady Jane: "why, surely you had not rather live with a man you were to convince than one you could persuade?"

"Would it not be safer?" said Caroline: "the arts of persuasion might be turned against us by others, but the power of conviction never could."

"Now, my dear, you are too deep for me," replied Lady Jane. "You said very little in our long debate this morning, and I'm afraid I said too much; but I own I could not help speaking candidly. Between ourselves, your father has some notions, which, you know, are a little odd."

"My father!" exclaimed Caroline.

"Yes, my dear, though he is your father, and my relation too, you know one cannot be quite blinded

by partiality—and I never would give up my judgment."

"Nor would I," said Caroline. "Nor I am sure would my father ever desire it. You see how freely he permits, he encourages us all to converse with him. He is never displeased with any of us for being of a different opinion from his."

"He may not show displeasure," said Lady Jane.

"Oh! he does not feel it, ma'am—I assure you," said Caroline, with emotion. "You do not know my father, indeed you do not."

"My dear," said Lady Jane, retracting, "I know he is an excellent father, and I am sure I would have you think so—it is your duty; but, at the same time, you know he is not infallible, and you must not insist," added she sharply, "upon all the world being of one way of thinking.—My dear, you are his favourite, and it is no wonder you defend him."

"Indeed, ma'am," said Caroline, "if I am his favourite, I do not know it."

"My dear, don't mistake me. It is no wonder that you *are*. You must be a favourite with everybody; and yet," said Lady Jane, and she paused, "as you hinted, perhaps I am mistaken: I think Rosamond seems—hey?——Now tell me candidly—which is the favourite?"

"I would if I knew," said Caroline.

"Oh! but there must be some favourite in a family—I know there must; and since you will not speak, I guess how it is. Perhaps, if I had asked your sister Rosamond to go to town with me next winter, your father would have been better pleased, and would have consented more readily."

"To lose her company if she were his favourite?" said Caroline, smiling.

"But you know, my dear," continued Lady Jane,

without hearing or attending to this, "you know, my dear, that Rosamond, though a very good girl and very sensible, I am sure, yet she has not your personal advantages, and I could do nothing for her in town, except, perhaps, introduce her at Mrs Cator's, and Lady Spilsbury's, or Lady Angelica Heading-ham's conversazione—Rosamond has a mixture of naïveté and sprightliness that is new, and might *take*. If she had more courage, and would hazard more in conversation, if she had, in short, *l'art de se faire valoir*, one could hand her verses about, and get her forward in the bel-esprit line. But she must stay till we have brought you into fashion, my dear, and another winter, perhaps——Well, my love, I will not keep you up longer. On Monday, if you please, we shall go—since you say you are sure your father is in earnest, in giving you leave to decide for yourself."

What was Lady Jane Granville's astonishment, when she heard Caroline decline, with polite thanks, her kind invitation!

Her ladyship stood silent with suspended indignation.

"This cannot be your own determination, child?"

"I beg your ladyship's pardon—it is entirely my own. When a person is convinced by good reasons, those reasons surely become their own. But independently of all the arguments which I have heard from my father and mother, my own feelings must prevent me from leaving home in our present circumstances. I cannot quit my parents and my sister, now they are, comparatively speaking, in distress. Neither in prosperity nor adversity do I wish to leave my family, but certainly not in adversity."

"High-flown notions! Your family is not in any great distress, that I see: there is a change, to be sure, in the style of life; but a daughter more, you know, only increases the—the difficulties."

"I believe my father and mother do not think so," said Caroline; "and till they do, I wish to stay with them, and share their fortune, whatever it may be."

"I have done—as you please—you are to decide for yourself, Miss Caroline Percy: this is your final determination?"

"It is," said Caroline; "but permit me," added she, taking Lady Jane's hand, and endeavouring by the kindest tone of gratitude to avert the displeasure which she saw gathering, "permit me to assure you, that I am truly grateful for your kindness, and I hope —I am sure, that I never shall forget it."

Lady Jane drew away her hand haughtily. "Permit me to assure you, Miss Caroline Percy, that there are few, very few young ladies indeed, even among my own nearest relations, to whom I would have undertaken to be *chaperon*. I do not know another young lady in England to whom I would have made the offer I have made to you, nor would that offer ever have been made could I reasonably have foreseen the possibility of its being refused. Let us say no more, ma'am, if you please—we understand one another now—and I wish you a good night."

Caroline retired, sorry to have displeased one who had shown so much friendly eagerness to serve her, yet not in the least disposed to change her determination. The next day Lady Jane's morning face boded no good. Mr and Mrs Percy in vain endeavoured by all the kind attentions in their power to assuage her feelings, but nothing restored her to that sweet temper in which she had begun the chapter of advice. She soon announced that she had received letters which called her immediately to Tunbridge, and her ladyship quitted the Hills, resolving never more to visit relations who would not be guided by her opinion.

The next persons who came to visit the Percy family in their retirement were Mrs Hungerford and her daughter, Mrs Mortimer, who had been friends and near neighbours whilst they resided at Percy Hall, and whose society they had particularly regretted. The distance at which they now lived from Hungerford Castle was such, that they had little hope that any intercourse could be kept up with its inhabitants, especially as Mrs Hungerford had arrived at that time of life when she was exempted from the ceremony of visiting, and she seldom stirred from home except when she went to town annually to see her daughter Mortimer.

"So," said Mrs Hungerford, as Mr Percy helped her out of her carriage, "my good friend, you are surprised at seeing me, are you?—Ah! you thought I was too old or too lazy to come; but I am happy to be able to convince you that you are mistaken. See what motive will do! You know Mr Percy says, that people can do anything they please, and it is certain that it pleased me to do this."

When she was seated, and Mrs Percy spoke of the distance from which she had kindly come to see them, she answered, "I hear people talk of a *visiting distance;* and I understand perfectly well what it means when acquaintance are in question, but for friends there is no *visiting distance.* Remove to the Land's End, and, old as I am, I will pursue and overtake you too, tortoise as I seem; and don't depend upon dark nights, for every night is full moon to me, when I am bent upon a visit to a friend; and don't depend upon hills—there are no Pyrenees between us."

These sound, perhaps, like mere civil speeches, but they came from one who always spoke sincerely, and who was no common person. Mrs Hungerford was,

by those who did not know her, thought proud; those who did, knew that she had reason to be proud. She was of noble descent, dignified appearance, polite manners, strong understanding, and high character. Her fortune, connexions, various knowledge, and extraordinary merit, had, during a long life, given her means of becoming acquainted with most of the persons of any celebrity or worth in her own or in foreign countries. No new candidate for fame appeared in any line of life, without desiring to be noticed by Mrs Hungerford; no traveller of distinction or of literature visited England without providing himself with letters of introduction to Mrs Hungerford, and to her accomplished daughter, the wife of Admiral Mortimer. In her early youth she had passed some years abroad, and had the vivacity, ease, polish, *tact*, and *esprit de société* of a Frenchwoman, with the solidity of understanding, amiable qualities, domestic tastes, and virtues of an Englishwoman. The mutual affection of this mother and daughter not only secured their own happiness, but diffused an additional charm over their manners, and increased the interest which they otherwise inspired. Mrs Mortimer's house in London was the resort of the best company, in the best sense of the word: it was not that dull, dismal, unnatural thing, an English *conversazione*, where people are set, against their will and their nature, to talk wit; or reduced, against their pride and their conscience, to worship *idols*. This society partook of the nature of the best English and the best French society, judiciously combined: the French mixture of persons of talents and of rank, men of literature and of the world; the French habit of mingling feminine and masculine subjects of conversation, instead of separating the sexes, far as the confines of their prison-room will allow, into hostile parties, dooming

one sex to politics, argument, and eternal sense, the other to scandal, dress, and eternal nonsense. Yet with these French manners, there were English morals; with this French ease, gaiety, and politeness, English sincerity, confidence, and safety: no *simagrée*, no *espionage;* no intrigue, political or gallant; none of that profligacy, which not only disgraced, but destroyed the *reality* of pleasure in Parisian society, at its most brilliant æra. The persons of whom Mrs Mortimer's society was formed were, in their habits and good sense, so thoroughly English, that, even had it been possible for them to put morality and religion out of the question, they would still have thought it quite as convenient and agreeable to love their own husbands and wives as to play at cross-purposes in gallanting their neighbours'. Of consequence, Mrs Mortimer, in the bloom of youth and height of fashion, instead of being a coquette, "hunting after men with her eyes," was beloved, almost to adoration, as a daughter, a wife, a mother, a friend. Mrs Hungerford, at an advanced age, was not a wretched, selfish, Madame du Deffand, exacting *hommage* and *attentions*, yet disbelieving in the existence of friendship; complaining in the midst of all the luxuries of life, mental and corporeal, of being oppressed by ennui, unable to find any one to love and esteem, or incapable of loving and esteeming any one; Mrs Hungerford, surrounded "with all that should accompany old age,"

"As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,"

was, as she often declared, with gratitude to Providence, happier in age than she had been even in youth. With warm affections, and benevolence guided and governed in its objects by reason and religion; indulgent to human nature in general, and loving it,

but not with German cosmopolitism—first and best, loving her daughter, her family comprising a wide and happy extent of relations and connexions, sons and nephews in the army and navy, or in different employments in the state: many of these young men already distinguished, others wanting only opportunity to do equal honour to their name.

During the summer, Mrs Mortimer usually spent some months at Hungerford Castle, and generally took with her from town some friends whose company she thought would peculiarly suit her mother's taste. Mrs Hungerford had always been in the habit of inviting the Percy family, whenever she had anybody with her whom she thought they would wish to see or hear; and thus the young people, though living retired in the country, had enjoyed the advantages of becoming early acquainted with many celebrated literary and public characters, and of living in the best society; these were advantages which they obtained from their education and their merit; for assuredly Mrs Hungerford would never have troubled herself with them merely because they were her neighbours, possessing so many thousand pounds a year, and representatives of the Percy interest in the county.—A proof of which, if any were wanting, is, that she never took the least notice of those who now held their place at Percy Hall; and the first visit she paid when she came to the country, the first visit she had been known to pay for years, was to her friends the Percys, after they had lost their thousands per annum. So completely was it themselves and not their fortune which she had always considered, that she never condoled with them, and scarcely seemed to advert to any change in their circumstances. She perceived, to be sure, that she was not at Percy Hall; she discovered, probably, that she was in a small instead of a

large room; the change of prospect from the windows struck her eye, and she remarked that this part of the country was more beautiful than that to which she had been accustomed.—As to the more or less of show, of dress, or equipage, these things did not merely make no difference in Mrs Hungerford's estimation of persons, but in fact scarcely made any impression upon her senses or attention. She had been so much accustomed to magnificence upon a large scale, that the different subordinate degrees were lost upon her; and she had seen so many changes of fashion and of fortune, that she attached little importance to these. Regardless of the drapery of objects, she saw at once what was substantial and essential. It might, she thought, be one man's taste to visit her in a barouche and four, with half-a-dozen servants, and another person's pleasure to come without parade or attendants—this was indifferent to her. It was their conversation, their characters, their merit, she looked to; and many a lord and lady of showy dress and equipage, and vast importance in their own opinions, shrunk into insignificance in the company of Mrs Hungerford; and, though in the room with her, passed before her eyes without making a sufficient sensation upon her organs to attract her notice, or to change the course of her thoughts.

All these *peculiarities* in this lady's character rendered her particularly agreeable to the Percy family in their present circumstances. She pressed them to pay her a long visit.

"You see," said Mrs Hungerford, "that I had the grace to forbear asking this favour till I had possession of my daughter Mortimer, and could bring her with me to entice you.—And my dear young friends, you shall find young friends too, as well as old ones, at my house: my nieces, the Lady Pembrokes, are to

be with me; and Lady Angelica Headingham, who will entertain you, though, perhaps, you will sometimes be tired *for* her, she works so hard *aux galères de bel-esprit*. I acknowledge she has a little too much affectation. But we must have charity for affectation and its multitude of foibles; for, you know, Locke says that it is only a mistaken desire to please. Angelica will find out her mistakes in time, and after trying all manners, will hold fast by the best—that is, the most natural: in the meantime, do you, my dear young friends, come and admire her as an inimitable actress. Then, Mr Percy, I have for you three temptations—a man of letters, a man of science, and a man of sense. And, for the climax of my eloquence, I have reserved," continued she, turning to Mrs Percy, "my appeal to the mother's feelings. Know, then, that my son, my eldest hope, my colonel, has arrived from the Continent—landed last night—I expect him home in a few days, and you must come and flatter me that he is prodigiously improved by the service he has seen, and the wounds which he can show, and assure me that, next to your own Godfrey, you would name my Gustavus, of all the officers in the army, as most deserving to be our commander-in-chief."

An invitation, which there were so many good and kind reasons for accepting, could not be refused. But before we go to Hungerford Castle, and before we see Colonel Hungerford—upon whom, doubtless, many a one at this instant, as well as Rosamond Percy, has formed designs or prognostics in favour of Caroline—we must read the following letter, and bring up the affairs of Alfred and Erasmus.

Chapter xv.

LETTER FROM ALFRED PERCY TO HIS MOTHER.

"MY DEAR MOTHER,—I am shocked by your story of Kate Robinson. I agree with you in rejoicing that Caroline had sufficient penetration to see the faults of Buckhurst Falconer's character, and steadiness enough, notwithstanding his agreeable talents, never to give him any encouragement. I agree with you, also, that it was fortunate that her last letter to him was written and sent before this affair came to her knowledge. It was much better that she should abide by her objection to his general principles than to have had explanations and discussions on a subject into which she could not enter with propriety.

"I will, as you desire, keep Buckhurst's secret. Indeed, in a worldly point of view, it behoves him that it should be carefully kept, because Bishop Clay, the prelate, who gave him his present living, though he tolerates gormandizing to excess, is extremely strict with his clergy *in other matters;* and, as I once heard Buckhurst say—

> 'Compounds for sins he is inclin'd to,
> By damning those he has no mind to.'

Buckhurst had, I believe, hopes that Caroline would have relented, in consequence of his last overture; he was thrown into despair by her answer, containing, as he told me, such a calm and civil repetition of her refusal—that he swears he will never trouble her again. For a fortnight after, he protests he was ready to hang himself. About that time, I suppose, when he heard of Kate Robinson's death, he shut himself up in his

rooms for several days—said he was not well, and could not see anybody. When he came out again, he looked wretchedly ill, and unhappy: I pitied him—I felt the truth of what Rosamond said, 'that there is such a mixture of good and bad in his character, as makes me change my opinion of him every half-hour.'

"He has just done me an essential service. He learnt the other day from one of his sisters the secret reason why Lord Oldborough was displeased with Godfrey, and why Godfrey was despatched to the West Indies.—Lord Oldborough had been told, either by Cunningham, or by one of his sisters, that Godfrey made love to Miss Hauton, and that when he came to town ostensibly on some regimental business, and was pleading for a brother officer, his concealed motive was to break off the marriage of his lordship's niece. Buckhurst had been at the opera in the same box with Miss Hauton and with my brother Godfrey one night. Godfrey's conduct had been misrepresented, and as soon as Buckhurst found that Lord Oldborough had been deceived, he was determined that he should know the truth; or, at least, that he should know that my brother was not to blame. Godfrey never mentioned the subject to me; but, from what I can understand, the lady showed him *distinguished attention*. How Buckhurst Falconer managed to *right* my brother in Lord Oldborough's opinion without *involving* the young lady, I do not know.—He said that he had fortunately had an opportunity one evening at his father's, when he was playing chess with Lord Oldborough, of speaking to him on that subject, when none of his family was watching him. He told me that Lord Oldborough desires to see me, and has appointed his hour to-morrow morning. Now, Rosamond, my dear, set your imagination to work; I must

go and draw a *replication*, which will keep mine fast bound.

"Yours truly,
"ALFRED PERCY."

At the appointed hour, Alfred waited upon the minister, and was received graciously. Not one word of Godfrey, however, or of anything leading to that subject. Lord Oldborough spoke to Alfred as to the son of his old friend. He began by lamenting the misfortunes which had deprived Mr Percy of that estate and station to which he had done honour. His lordship went on to say that he was sorry that Mr Percy's love of retirement, or pride of independence, precluded all idea of seeing him in Parliament; but he hoped that Mr Percy's sons were in this extravagant notion of independence, and in this *only*, unlike their father.

With all due deference, Alfred took the liberty of replying to the word *extravagant*, and endeavoured to explain that his father's ideas of independence did not go beyond just bounds: Lord Oldborough, contrary to his usual custom when he met with anything like contradiction, did not look displeased; on the contrary, he complimented Alfred on his being a good advocate. Alfred was going *to fall into a commonplace*, about a good cause; but from that he was happily saved by Lord Oldborough's changing the conversation.

He took up a pamphlet which lay upon the table. It was Cunningham Falconer's, that is to say, the pamphlet which was published in Cunningham's name, and for which he was mean enough to take the credit from the poor starving genius in the garret. Lord Oldborough turned over the leaves. "Here is a passage that was quoted yesterday at dinner at com-

missioner Falconer's, but I don't think that any of the company, or the commissioner himself, though he is, or was, a reading man, could recollect to what author it alludes.

Lord Oldborough pointed to the passage: "*Thus the fane of heroes is at last neglected by their worshippers, and left to the care of the birds of heaven, or abandoned to the serpents of the earth.*"

Alfred fortunately recollected that this alluded to a description in Arrian of the island of Achilles, the present Isle of Serpents, where there is that temple of the hero, of which, as the historian says, "the care is left to the birds alone, who every morning repair to the sea, wet their wings, and sprinkle the temple, afterwards sweeping with their plumage its sacred pavement."

Lord Oldborough smiled, and said, "The author—the reputed author of this pamphlet, sir, is obliged to you for throwing light upon a passage which he could not himself elucidate."

This speech of Lord Oldborough's alluded to something that had passed at a dinner at Lord Skreene's, the day before Cunningham had set out on his embassy. Cunningham had been *posed* by this passage, for which secretary Cope, who hated him, had maliciously complimented him, and besought him to explain it. Secretary Cope, who was a poet, made an epigram on Cunningham the diplomatist. The lines we do not remember. The points of it were, that Cunningham was so complete a diplomatist, that he would not commit himself by giving up his authority, even for a quotation, and that when he knew the author of an excellent thing, he, with admirable good faith, *kept it to himself.* This epigram remained at the time a profound secret to Lord Oldborough. Whilst Cunningham was going with a prosperous gale, it was not heard

of; but it worked round, according to the manœuvres of courts, just by the time the tide of favour began to ebb. Lord Oldborough, dissatisfied with one of Cunningham's despatches, was heard to say, as he folded it up, "*A slovenly performance!*"

Then, at the happy moment, stepped in the rival secretary Cope, and put into his lordship's hands the epigram and the anecdote.

All this the reader is to take as a note explanatory upon Lord Oldborough's last speech to Alfred, and now to go on with the conversation—at the word *elucidate*.

"I suspect," continued his lordship, "that Mr Alfred Percy knows more of this pamphlet altogether than the reputed author ever did."

Alfred felt himself change colour, and the genius in the garret rushed upon his mind; at the same instant he recollected that he was not at liberty to name Mr Temple, and that he must not betray Cunningham. Alfred answered that it was not surprising he should know the pamphlet well, as he probably admired it more, and had read it oftener, than the author himself had ever done.

"Very well parried, young gentleman. You will not allow, then, that you had any hand in writing it?"

"No, my lord," said Alfred, "I had none whatever; I never saw it till it was published."

"I have not a right, in politeness, to press the question. Permit me, however, to say, that it is a performance of which any man might be proud."

"I should, my lord, be proud—very proud, if I had written it; but I am incapable of assuming a merit that is not mine, and I trust the manner in which I now disclaim it does not appear like the affected modesty of an author who wishes to have that believed

which he denies. I hope I convince your lordship of the truth."

"I cannot have any doubt of what you assert in this serious manner, sir. May I ask if you can tell me the name of the real author?"

"Excuse me, my lord—I cannot. I have answered your lordship with perfect openness, as far as I am concerned."

"Sir," said Lord Oldborough, "I confess that I began this conversation with the prepossession that you were equal to a performance of which I think highly, but you have succeeded in convincing me that I was mistaken—that you are not equal—but superior to it."

Upon this compliment, Alfred, as he thought the force of politeness could no farther go, rose, bowed, and prepared to retire.

"Are you in a hurry to leave me, Mr Percy?"

"Quite the contrary, but I was afraid of encroaching upon your lordship's goodness; I know that your time is most valuable, and that your lordship has so much business of importance."

"Perhaps Mr Alfred Percy may assist me in saving time hereafter."

Alfred sat down again, as his lordship's eye desired it.—Lord Oldborough remained for a few moments silent, leaning upon his arm on the table, deep in thought.

"Yes, sir," said he, "I certainly have, as you say, much business upon my hands. But *that* is not the difficulty; with hands and heads business is easily arranged and expedited. I have hands and heads enough at my command. Talents of all sorts can be obtained for their price, but that which is above all price, integrity, cannot—there's the difficulty—there is my difficulty. I have not a single man about me whom I can trust—many who understand my views, but none who

feel them—'*Des ames de boue et de fange!*' Wretches who care not if the throne and the country perish, if their little interests——Young gentleman," said he, recollecting himself, and turning to Alfred, "I feel as if I was speaking to a part of your father when I am speaking to you."

Alfred felt this, and Lord Oldborough saw that he felt it strongly.

"*Then*, my dear sir," said he, "you understand me—I see we understand and shall suit one another. I am in want of a secretary to supply the place of Mr Cunningham Falconer. Mr Drakelow is going to Constantinople; but he shall first initiate his successor in the business of his office—a routine which little minds would make great minds believe is a mystery above ordinary comprehension. But, sir, I have no doubt that you will be expert in a very short time in the technical part—in the routine of office; and if it suits your views, in one word, I should be happy to have you for my private secretary. Take time to consider, if you do not wish to give an answer immediately; but I beg that you will consult no one but yourself—not even your father. And as soon as your mind is made up, let me know your decision."

After returning thanks to the minister, who had, by this time, risen to a prodigious height in Alfred's opinion; after having reiterated his thanks with a warmth which was not displeasing, he retired. The account of his feelings on this occasion is given with much *truth* in his own letter, from which we extract the passage:

"I believe I felt a little like Gil Blas after his first visit at court. Vapours of ambition certainly mounted into my head, and made me a little giddy; that night I did not sleep quite so well as usual. The bar and the court, Lord Oldborough and my special pleader,

were continually before my eyes balancing in my imagination all the *pros* and *cons*. I fatigued myself, but could neither rest nor decide. Seven years of famine at the bar—horrible! but then independence and liberty of conscience—and in time, success—the certain reward of industry—well-earned wealth—perhaps, honours — why not the highest professional honours? The life of a party man and a politician, agreed by all who have tried, even by this very Lord Oldborough himself, agreed to be an unhappy life—obliged to live with people I despise—might be tempted, like others, to do things for which I should despise myself—subject to caprice—at best, my fortune quite dependent on my patron's continuance in power—power and favour uncertain.

"It was long before I got my pros and cons even into this rude preparation for comparison, and longer still before the logical process of giving to each good and evil its just value, and drawing clear deductions from distinct premises, could be accomplished. However, in four-and-twenty hours I solved the problem.

"I waited upon Lord Oldborough to tell him my conclusion. With professions of gratitude, respect, and attachment, more sincere, I fancy, than those he usually hears, I began; and ended by telling him in the best manner I could, that I thought my trade was more honest than his, and that, hard as a lawyer's life was, I preferred it to a politician's.——You don't suspect me of saying all this—no, I was not quite so brutal; but, perhaps, it was implied by my declining the honour of the secretaryship, and preferring to abide by my profession. Lord Oldborough looked—or my vanity fancied that he looked—disappointed. After a pause of silent displeasure, he said, 'Well, sir, upon the whole I believe you have decided wisely. I am sorry that you cannot serve me, and that I

cannot serve you in the manner which I had proposed. Yours is a profession in which ministerial support can be of little use, but in which talents, perseverance, and integrity, are secure, sooner or later, of success. I have, therefore, only to wish you opportunity: and if any means in my power should occur of accelerating that opportunity, you may depend upon it, sir,' said his lordship, holding out his hand to me, 'I shall not forget—even if you were not the son of my old friend, you have made an interest for yourself in my mind.'

"Thus satisfactorily we parted—no—just as I reached the door, his lordship added, 'Your brother, Captain Percy—have you heard from him lately?'

"'Yes, my lord, from Plymouth, where they were driven back by contrary winds.'

"'Ha!—he was well, I hope?'

"'Very well, I thank your lordship.'

"'That's well—he is a temperate man, I think. So he will stand the climate of the West Indies—and, probably, it will not be necessary for his Majesty's service that he should remain there long.'

"I bowed—was again retiring, and was again recalled.

"'There was a major in your brother's regiment about whom Captain Percy spoke to me—Major——'

"'Gascoigne, I believe, my lord.'

"'Gascoigne — true — Gascoigne.' His lordship wrote the name down in a note-book.

"Bows for the last time—not a word more on either side.

"And now that I have written all this to you, my dear mother, I am almost ashamed to send it—because it is so full of egotism. But Rosamond, the *excuser general*, will apologise for me by pleading that I was obliged to tell the truth, and the whole truth.

"Love to Caroline, and thanks for her letter.—Love to Rosamond, upon condition that she will write to me from Hungerford Castle, and cheer my solitude in London with news from the country, and from home.

"Your affectionate son,

"Alfred Percy.

"P.S.—I hope you all like O'Brien."

We hope the reader will recollect the poor Irishman, whose leg the surgeon had condemned to be cut off, but which was saved by Erasmus. A considerable time afterwards, one morning, when Erasmus was just getting up, he heard a loud knock at his door, and in one and the same instant pushing past his servant into his bedchamber, and to the foot of his bed, rushed this Irishman O'Brien, breathless, and with a face perspiring joy. "I axe your honour's pardon, master, but it's what you're wanting down street in all haste—here's an elegant case for ye, doctor dear!—That painter-jantleman down in the square there beyond that is not *expicted.*"

"Not expected!" said Erasmus.

"Ay, not expected! so put on ye with the speed of light—Where's his waistcoat," continued he, turning to Dr Percy's astonished servant, "and coat?—the top coat, and the wig—has he one?—Well! boots or shoes give him any way."

"But I don't clearly understand—Pray did this gentleman send for me?" said Dr Percy.

"Send for your honour. Troth he never thought of it—no, nor couldn't—how could he? and he in the way he was and is. But God bless ye! and never mind shaving, or another might get it afore we'd be back. Though there was none *in it* but myself when I left it—but still keep on buttoning for the life."

Erasmus dressed as quickly as he could, not understanding, however, above one word in ten that had been said to him. His servant, who did not comprehend even one word, endeavoured in vain to obtain an explanation; but O'Brien, paying no regard to his solemn face of curiosity, put him aside with his hand, and continuing to address Dr Percy, followed him about the room.

"Master! you mind my *mintioning* to you last time I *seen* your honour, that my leg was weak *by times*, no fault though to the doctor that cured it—so I could not be *after carrying* the weighty loads I used up and down the ladders at every call, so I quit *sarving* the masons, and sought for lighter work, and found an employ that *shuted* me with a jantleman painter, grinding of his colours, and that was what I was at this morning, so I was, and standing as close to him as I am this minute to your honour, thinking of nothing at all just now, please your honour, *forenent* him—*asy* grinding, *whin* he took some sort or kind of a fit."

"A fit! Why did you not tell me that sooner?"

"Sure I *tould* you he was not *expicted*—that is, if you don't know in England, *not expicted to live;* and sure I *tould* your honour so from the first," said O'Brien. "But then the jantleman was as well as I am this minute, that minute afore—and the *nixt* fell his length on the floor entirely. Well! I set him up again, and, for want of better, filled out a thimbleful, say, of the spirits of wine as they call it, which he got by good luck for the varnish, and made him take it down, and he come to, and I axed him how was he after it?—Better, says he. That's well, says I; and who will I send for to ye, sir? says I. But afore he could make answer, I bethought me of your own honour; and for fear he would say another, I

never troubled him putting the question to him again, but just set the spirits nigh hand him, and away with me here; I come off without *letting on* a word to nobody, good or bad, in dread your honour would miss the job."

"Job!" said Dr Percy's servant: "do you think my master wants a job?"

"Oh! Lord love ye, and just give his hat. Would you have us be standing on ceremony now in a case of life and death?"

Dr Percy was, as far as he understood it, of the Irishman's way of thinking. He followed as fast as he could to the painter's—found that he had had a slight paralytic stroke, from which he had recovered. We need not detail the particulars. Nature and Dr Percy *brought him through*. He was satisfied with his physician; for Erasmus would not take any fee, because he went unsent for by the patient. The painter, after his recovery, was one day complimenting Dr Percy on the inestimable service he had done the arts in restoring him to his pencil, in proof of which the artist showed many masterpieces that wanted only the finishing touch, in particular a huge, long-limbed, fantastic, allegorical piece of his own design, which he assured Dr Percy was the finest example of the *beau idéal*, ancient or modern, that human genius had ever produced upon canvas. "And what do you think, doctor," said the painter, "tell me what you can think of a connoisseur, a patron, sir, who could stop my hand, and force me from that immortal work to a portrait? A portrait! Barbarian! He fit to encourage genius! He set up to be a Mecænas! Mere vanity! Gives pensions to four sign-post daubers, not fit to grind my colours! Knows no more of the art than that fellow," pointing to the Irishman, who was at that instant grinding the colours —*asy* as he described himself.

"And lets me languish here in obscurity!" continued the enraged painter. "Now I'll never put another stroke to his Dutch beauty's portrait, if I starve—if I rot for it in jail! He a Mecænas!"

The changes upon this abuse were rung repeatedly by this irritated genius, his voice and palsied hand trembling with rage while he spoke, till he was interrupted by a carriage stopping at the door.

"Here's the patron!" cried the Irishman, with an arch look. "Ay, it's the patron, sure enough!"

Dr Percy was going away, but O'Brien got between him and the door, menacing his coat with his pallet knife covered with oil—Erasmus stopped.

"I axe your pardon, but don't go," whispered he: "I wouldn't for the best coat nor waistcoat ever I seen you went this minute, dear!"

Mr Gresham was announced—a gentleman of a most respectable, benevolent, prepossessing appearance, whom Erasmus had some recollection of having seen before. Mr Gresham recognised him instantly: he was the merchant whom Erasmus had met at Sir Amyas Courtney's the morning when he offended Sir Amyas about the made shell. After having spoken a few words to the painter about the portrait, Mr Gresham turned to Dr Percy, and said, "I am afraid, sir, that you lost a friend at court by your sincerity about a shell."

Before Erasmus could answer—in less time than he could have thought it possible to take off a stocking, a great bare leg—O'Brien's leg, came between Mr Gresham and Dr Percy.

"There's what lost him a rich friend anyway, and gained him a poor one, if that would do any good. There it is now! This leg! God for ever bless him and reward him for it!"

Then with eloquence, emphasis, and action, which

came from the heart, and went to the heart, the poor fellow told how his leg had been saved, and spoke of what Dr Percy had done for him, in terms which Erasmus would have been ashamed to hear, but that he really was so much affected with O'Brien's gratitude, and thought it did so much honour to human nature, that he could not stop him.—Mr Gresham was touched also; and upon observing this, Erasmus's friend, with his odd mixture of comedy and pathos, ended with this exhortation, "And God bless you, sir! you're a great man, and have many to my knowledge under a compliment to you, and if you've any friends that are *lying*, or sick, if you'd recommend them to send for *him* in preference to any other of the doctors, it would be a charity to themselves and to me; for I will never have peace else, thinking how I have been a hindrance to him. And a charity it would be to themselves, for what does the sick want but to be cured? and there's the man will do that for them, as two witnesses here present can prove—that jantleman, if he would spake, and myself."

Erasmus now peremptorily stopped this scene, for he began to feel for himself, and to be ashamed of the ridicule which his puffing friend, in his zeal, was throwing upon him. Erasmus said that he had done nothing for O'Brien except placing him in St George's Hospital, where he had been admirably well attended. Mr Gresham, however, at once relieved his wounded delicacy, and dispelled all fears and anxiety, by the manner in which he spoke and looked. He concluded by inviting Dr Percy to his house, expressing with much cordiality a wish to be more intimately acquainted with a young gentleman, of whose character he had accidentally learned more good than his modesty seemed willing to allow should be known.

O'Brien's eyes sparkled; he rubbed his hands, but

restrained himself lest Dr Percy should be displeased. When Erasmus went away, O'Brien followed him downstairs, begging his honour's pardon—if he had said anything wrong or unbecoming, it was through ignorance.

It was impossible to be angry with him.

We extract from Erasmus's letter to his mother the following account of his first visit to Mr Gresham.

"When I went to see Mr Gresham, I was directed to an unfashionable part of the town, to one of the dark old streets of the city; and from all appearance I thought I was going to grope my way into some strange dismal den, like many of the ancient houses in that quarter of the town. But, to my surprise, after passing through a court, and up an unpromising staircase, I found myself in a spacious apartment. The darkness changed to light, the smoke and din of the city to retirement and fresh air. A near view of the Thames appeared through large windows down to the floor, balconies filled with flowers and sweet shrubs!—It was an Arabian scene in London. Rosamond, how you would have been delighted! But I have not yet told you that there was a young and beautiful lady sitting near the balcony, and her name is Constance: that is all I shall tell you about the young lady at present. I must go on with Mr Gresham, who was in his picture-gallery—yes, picture-gallery—and a very fine one it is. Mr Gresham, whose fortune is one of those of which only English merchants can form any adequate idea, makes use of it in a manner which does honour to his profession and to his country: he has patronized the arts with a munificence not unworthy of the Medici.

"My complaining genius, the painter, who had abused his patron so much, was there with his portrait, which, notwithstanding his vow never to touch it again,

he had finished, and brought home, and with it the sprawling Venus: he was now extremely angry with Mr Gresham for declining to purchase this chef-d'œuvre. With the painter was a poet equally vain and dissatisfied.

"I admired the mildness with which Mr Gresham bore with their ill-humour and vanity.—After the painter and poet, to my satisfaction, had departed, I said something expressive of my pity for patrons who had to deal with the irritable race. He mildly replied, that he thought that a man, surrounded as he was with all the comforts and luxuries of life, should have compassion, and should make allowance for genius struggling with poverty, disease, and disappointment. He acknowledged that he had met with much ingratitude, and had been plagued by the pretensions, expectations, and quarrels of his tribe of poets and painters. 'For a man's own happiness,' said he, 'the trade of a patron is the most dreadful he can follow—gathering samphire were nothing to it.'

"Pray tell my father this, because it opens a new view, and new confirmation of his opinions—I never spent a more agreeable day than this with Mr Gresham. He converses well, and has a variety of information, which he pours forth liberally, and yet without the slightest ostentation: his only wish seems to be to entertain and inform those to whom he speaks—he has no desire to shine. In a few hours we went over a world of literature. I was proud to follow him, and he seemed pleased that I could sometimes anticipate—I happened to know as well as he did the history of the two Flamels, and several particulars of the Jesuits in Paraguay.

"My father often told us when we were boys, that there is no knowledge, however distant it seems from our profession, that may not, some time or other, be

useful; and Mr Gresham, after he had conversed sufficiently with me both on literature and science, to discover that I was not an ignorant pretender, grew warm in his desire to serve me. But he had the politeness to refrain from saying anything directly about medicine; he expressed only an increased desire to cultivate my acquaintance, and begged that I would call upon him at any hour, and *give him the pleasure of my conversation, whenever I had time.*

"The next morning, he called upon me, and told me that he was desired to ask my advice for a sick partner of his, to whom, if I would accompany him, he would immediately introduce me. Who and what this partner is, and of what disease he is dying, if you have any curiosity to know, you shall hear in my next, this frank will hold no more—except love, light as air, to all at home.

"Dear mother, affectionately yours,
"E. Percy."

Chapter xvi.

NOW for the visit to Hungerford Castle—a fine old place in a beautiful park, which excelled many parks of greater extent by the uncommon size of its venerable oaks. In the castle, which was sufficiently spacious to accommodate with ease and perfect comfort the *troops of friends* which its owner's beneficent character drew round her, there were apartments that usually bore the name of some of those persons who were considered as the most intimate friends of the family. The Percys were of this number. They found their own rooms ready, the old servants of the house rejoicing to see them again, and eager in offering their services. Many things showed that they had

been thought of, and expected; yet there was nothing that could remind them that any change had taken place in their fortune: no formal or peculiar civilities from the mistress of the house, from her daughter, or nieces—neither more nor less attention than usual; but by everything that marked old habits of intimacy and confidence, the Percys were, as if undesignedly and necessarily, distinguished from other guests.

Of these the most conspicuous was the Lady Angelica Headingham.—Her ladyship had lately come to a large estate, and had consequently produced a great sensation in the fashionable world. During the early part of her life she had been much and injudiciously restrained. The moment the pressure was taken off, the spirit boiled with surprising rapidity: immediately Lady Angelica Headingham shone forth a beauty, a bel-esprit, and a patroness; and though she appeared as it were *impromptu* in these characters, yet, to do her justice, she supported them with as much spirit, truth, and confidence, as if she had been in the habit of playing them all her life, and as if she had trod the fashionable stage from her teens. There was only one point in which, perhaps, she erred; from not having been early accustomed to flattery, she did not receive it with quite sufficient *nonchalance*. The adoration paid to her in her triple capacity by crowds of worshippers only increased the avidity of her taste for incense, to receive which she would now and then stoop lower than became a goddess. She had not yet been suspected of a real partiality for any of her admirers, though she was accused of giving each just as much encouragement as was necessary to turn his head. Of these admirers two, the most eager and earnest in the pursuit, had followed her ladyship to the country, and were now at Hungerford Castle—Sir James Harcourt and Mr Barclay.

Sir James Harcourt was remarkably handsome and fashionable—completely a man of the world, and a courtier: who, after having ruined his fortune by standing for Government two contested county elections, had dangled year after year at court, living upon the hope and promise of a pension or a place, till his creditors warning him that they could wait no longer, he had fallen in love with Lady Angelica Headingham. Her ladyship's other admirer, Mr Barclay, was a man of considerable fortune, of good family, and of excellent sense and character. He had arrived at that time of life when he wished to settle to the quiet enjoyment of domestic happiness; but he had seen so much misery arise from unfortunate marriages among some of his particular friends, that he had been afraid of forming any attachment, or, at least, engagement. His acquaintance with fashionable life had still further rendered him averse from matrimony; and from love he had defended himself with infinite caution, and escaped, till in an unlucky moment he had met with Lady Angelica. Against his better judgment, he had been captivated by her charms and talents: his reason, however, still struggled with his passion—he had never actually declared his love; but the lady knew it probably better than he did, and her caprice and coquetry cost him many an agonizing hour. All which he bore with the silence and patience of a martyr.

When the Percy family saw Lady Angelica for the first time, she was in all her glory—fresh from a successful toilette, conscious of renovated powers, with an accumulated spirit of animation, and inspired by the ambition to charm a new audience. Though past the bloom of youth, she was a handsome showy woman, with the air of one who requires and receives admiration. Her attitudes, her action, and the varied

expression she threw into her countenance, were more than the occasion required, and rather too evidently designed to interest or to fascinate. She was surrounded by a group of gentlemen; Sir James Harcourt, Mr Barclay, Mr Seebright, a young poet; Mr Grey, a man of science; and others—*personages muets*. Arduous as was the task, Lady Angelica's various powers and indefatigable exertion proved capable of keeping each of these different minds in full play, and in high admiration.

Beauties are always curious about beauties, and wits about wits. Lady Angelica had heard that one of the Miss Percys was uncommonly handsome. Quick as eye could glance, her ladyship's passed by Mrs Percy and Rosamond as they entered the room, fixed upon Caroline, and was satisfied. There was beauty enough to alarm, but simplicity sufficient to remove all fears of rivalship. Caroline entered, without any prepared grace or practised smile, but merely as if she was coming into a room. Her two friends, the Lady Pembrokes, instantly placed her between them, her countenance expressing just what she felt, affectionate pleasure at seeing them.

"A sweet pretty creature, really!" whispered Lady Angelica, to her admirer in waiting, Sir James Harcourt.

"Ye—ye—yes; but nothing *marquante*," replied Sir James.

Mr Barclay's eye followed, and fixed upon Caroline with a degree of interest. The room was so large, and they were at such a distance from Caroline, who was now occupied in listening to her friends, that Lady Angelica could continue her observations without fear of being overheard.

"There is something so interesting in that air of simplicity!" pursued her ladyship, addressing herself

to Mr Barclay. "Don't you think there is a wonderful charm in simplicity? 'Tis a pity it can't last: it is like those delicate colours which always catch the taste the moment they are seen, by which I've been taken in a hundred times, and have now forsworn for ever—treacherous colours that fade, and fly even while you look at them."

"That is a pity," said Mr Barclay, withdrawing his eyes from Caroline.

"A thousand pities," said Lady Angelica. "Perhaps, in the country, this delicate charm might possibly, and with infinite care and caution, last a few years, but in town it would not last a season."

"True—too true," said Mr Barclay.

"For which reason," pursued Lady Angelica, "give me something a little more durable, something that can stand what it must meet with in the world: fashion, for instance, though not half so charming till we are used to it; or knowledge, though often dear-bought; or genius, though doubly taxed with censure; or wit, though so hard to be had genuine—anything is better than a faded charm, a has-been-pretty simplicity."

"When it comes to *that*, it is lamentable, indeed," said Mr Barclay. He seemed to wish to say something more in favour of simplicity, but to be overpowered by wit.

Sir James shrugged his shoulders, and protested that simplicity had something too *fade* in it, to suit his taste.

All this time, where was Colonel Hungerford? He had been expected to arrive this day; but a letter came to tell his mother, that he was detained by indispensable military business, and that, he feared, he could not for some weeks have the pleasure of being at home. Every one looked and felt disappointed.

"So," thought Rosamond, "we shall be gone before he comes, and he will not see Caroline!"

"So!" said Lady Angelica, to herself, "he will not see me."

Rosamond was somewhat comforted for her disappointment, by observing that Caroline was not quite lost upon Mr Barclay, pre-occupied though he was with his brilliant mistress. She thought he seemed to notice the marked difference there was in their manner of passing the day.

Lady Angelica, though she would sometimes handle a pencil, touch the harp, or take up a book, yet never was really employed. Caroline was continually occupied. In the morning, she usually sat with Rosamond and the two Lady Pembrokes, in a little room called *the Oriel*, which opened into the great library. Here in happy retirement Caroline and Rosamond looked over Mrs Hungerford's select library, and delighted to read the passages which had been marked with approbation. At other times, without disturbing the rest of the company, or being disturbed by them, Caroline enjoyed the opportunity of cultivating her talents for music and painting, with the assistance of her two friends, who eminently excelled in these accomplishments.

All this time Lady Angelica spent in talking to show her wit, or lounging to show her grace. Now and then her ladyship condescended to join the young people, when they went out to walk, but never unless they were attended by gentlemen. The beauties of nature have come into fashion of late, and Lady Angelica Headingham could talk of bold outlines, and sublime mountains, the charming effects of light and shade, fine *accidents*, and rich foliage, spring verdure and autumnal tints—whilst Caroline could enjoy all these things, without expecting to be admired for admiring them. Mrs Mortimer was planting a new shrubbery, and laying out a ride through the park. Caroline took an unaffected interest in all her plans,

whilst Lady Angelica was interested only in showing how much she remembered of Price, and Repton, and Knight. She became too hot or too cold, or she was tired to death, the moment she ceased to be the principal object of attention. But though her ladyship was thus idle by day, she sometimes worked hard by night—hard as Butler is said to have toiled in secret, to support the character of an idle universal genius, who knows everything without studying anything. From dictionaries and extracts, abridgments and *beauties* of various authors, here, and there, and everywhere, she picked up shining scraps, and often by an ostentation of superficial knowledge succeeded in appearing in conversation to possess a vast extent of literature, and to be deeply skilled in matters of science, of which she knew nothing, and for which she had no taste.

Mr Seebright, the poet, was easily duped by this display: he expressed the most flattering astonishment, and pronounced her ladyship to be an universal genius. He looked up to Lady Angelica for patronage. He was so weak, or so ignorant of the world, as to imagine that the patronage of a fashionable literary lady of high rank would immediately guide the opinion of the public, and bring a poet forward to fortune and fame. With these hopes he performed his daily, hourly duty of admiration to his fair patroness, with all possible zeal and assiduity; but it was observed by Rosamond that, in conversation, whenever Mr Seebright had a new idea or a favourite allusion to produce, his eye involuntarily turned first to Caroline; and though he professed, on all points of taste and criticism, to be implicitly governed by Lady Angelica Headingham, there was "a small still voice" to which he more anxiously listened.

As to Mr Grey, the man of science—he soon

detected Lady Angelica's ignorance; smiled in silence at her blunders, and despised her for her *arts of pretence*. In vain, to win his suffrage, she produced the letters of various men of note and talents with whom she was in correspondence; in vain she talked of all the persons of rank who were her relations or dear friends:—she should be so happy to introduce him to this great man, or to mention him to that great lady; she should be so proud, on her return to town, to have Mr Grey at her *esprit parties*; she would have such and such celebrated characters to meet him, and would have the pleasure and honour of introducing him to every person worth knowing in town.

With all due civility Mr Grey declined these offers. There were few persons the pleasure or honour of whose company could compensate to him for the loss of his time, or equal the enjoyment he had in his own occupations; and those few he was so happy to have for his friends. He did not wish to form new acquaintance—he never went to *conversaziones*—he was much obliged to her ladyship, but he did not want to be *mentioned* to great men or great women. The nature of his fame was quite independent of fashion.—In this respect men of science have much the advantage of men of taste. Works of taste may, to a certain degree, be *cried up* or *cried down* by fashion. The full-fledged bard soars superior, and looks down at once upon the great and little world; but the young poet, in his first attempts to rise, is often obliged, or thinks himself obliged, to have his wing impelled by patronage.

With all her resources, however, both of patronage and of *bel-esprit*, Lady Angelica was equally surprised and mortified to find herself foiled at her own arms, by a girl whom nobody knew. She changed her manœuvres—she thought she could show Miss Caroline Percy, that, whatever might be her abilities, her

knowledge, or her charms, these must all submit to the superior power of fashion. Caroline having lived in the country, could not know much of the world of fashion. This was a world from which she thought she could move every other at pleasure. Her conversation was no longer of books, of which all of equal talents were competent to form a judgment; but her *talk* was now of persons, with whom no one who had not lived in the great world could pretend to be acquainted, of whom they could not presume to judge. Her ladyship tried in vain to draw Mrs Hungerford and Mrs Mortimer to her aid; they were too well bred to encourage this exclusive and unprofitable conversation. But her ladyship knew that she could be sufficiently supported by Sir James Harcourt! He prided himself upon knowing and being known to *everybody*, that is *anybody*, in London; he had an inexhaustible fund of town and court anecdote. What an auxiliary for Lady Angelica! But though their combined operations were carried on with consummate skill, and though the league offensive was strictly kept with every demonstration of mutual amity that could excite jealousy or express contempt for rival powers; yet the ultimate purpose was not gained—Caroline was not mortified, and Mr Barclay was not jealous; at least, he was not sufficiently jealous to afford a clear triumph.

One morning, when she had been playing off all her graces, while Sir James admired her in every Proteus form of affectation, Mr Barclay, as she thought, evidently pained by her coquetry, retired from the sofa where she sat, and went to Mrs Hungerford's table, where he took up a book and began to read. Lady Angelica spared no art to distract his attention: she contrived for herself an employment, which called forth continual exclamations of admiration, joy, de-

spair, which at first made Mr Barclay turn to see by what they could be caused; but when he found that they were occasioned only by the rise or fall of a house of cards which she was building, he internally said "Pshaw!" and afterwards kept his eyes fixed upon his book. Sir James continued to serve the fair architect with the frail materials for her building—her *Folly*, as she called it—and for his services he received much encouragement of smiles, and many marked commendations. Mrs Hungerford called upon Mr Barclay to read a favourite poem.

Mr Barclay read remarkably well, and soon fixed the attention of all the company, except that of Lady Angelica and her knight, Sir James Harcourt, whom she detained in her service. She could not be so flagrantly rude as to interrupt the reader by audible exclamations, but by dumb-show, by a variety of gestures and pretty looks of delight at every fresh story added to her card edifice, and at every motion of terror lest her tower should fall, her ladyship showed Mr Barclay that she was not listening to that which she knew he was particularly desirous that she should hear.

The moment the reader's voice ceased, Lady Angelica approached the table. "Ten millions of pardons!" said she, drawing some cards from beneath Miss Caroline Percy's elbow, which rested on them. "Unpardonable wretch that I am, to have disturbed such a reverie and such an attitude! Mr Barclay," continued her ladyship, "now if you have leisure to think of me, may I trouble you for some of your little cards for the attic of my dear Folly."

Mr Barclay coolly presented the cards to her ladyship: then looked out of the window, observed that his horse was at the door, and was following Mr Percy out of the room, when Lady Angelica, just as

Mr Barclay passed, blew down her tower, and exclaimed, "There's an end of my folly—of one of my follies, I mean: I wish I could blow them all away so easily."

The sigh and look of penitence with which she pronounced these words were accepted as expiation—Mr Barclay stopped and returned; while sweeping the wreck of her tower from the table, she repeated—

> "Easy, as when ashore an infant stands,
> And draws imagined houses on the sands,
> The sportive wanton, pleased with some new play,
> Sweeps the slight works and fancied domes away:
> Thus vanish at thy touch the tow'rs and walls,
> The toil of *mornings* in a moment falls."

"Beautiful lines!" said Mr Barclay.

"And charmingly repeated," said Sir James Harcourt: "are they your ladyship's own?"

"No; Homer's," said she, smiling; "Pope's Homer's, I mean."

To cover this blunder as fast as possible, Sir James went on to something else, and asked what her ladyship thought of Flaxman's sketches from the Iliad and Odyssey? He had seen the book lying on the library table yesterday: indeed, his eye had been caught, as it lay open, by a striking resemblance—he knew it was very rude to talk of likenesses—but, really, the resemblance was striking between a lady he had in his view, and one of the figures in Flaxman, of Venus, or Penelope, he could not say which, but he would look for the book and see in a moment.

The book was not to be found on the library table; Mrs Hungerford said she believed it was in the Oriel: Sir James went to look—Miss Caroline Percy was drawing from it—that was unlucky, for Mr Barclay followed, stayed to admire Miss Percy's drawings, which he had never seen before, and in looking over

these sketches of hers from Flaxman's Homer, and from Euripides and Æschylus, which the Lady Pembrokes showed him, and in speaking of these, he discovered so much of Caroline's taste, literature, and feeling, that he could not quit the Oriel. Lady Angelica had followed to prevent mischief, and Mrs Hungerford had followed to enjoy the pleasure of seeing Caroline's modest merit appreciated. Whilst Mr Barclay admired in silence, Sir James Harcourt, not with his usual politeness, exclaimed, "I protest I had no notion that Miss Caroline Percy drew in this style!"

"That's possible," cried Lady Mary Pembroke, colouring with that prompt indignation which she was prone to feel when anything was said that seemed derogatory to her friends, "that's possible, Sir James; and yet you find Miss Caroline Percy does draw in this very superior style—yes, and it is the perfection of her accomplishments, that they are never exhibited."

"You have always the pleasure of discovering them," said Mrs Hungerford; "they are as a woman's accomplishments and acquirements ought to be, more retiring than obtrusive; or as my old friend, Dr South, quaintly but aptly expresses it—more in intaglio than in cameo."

At this instant a sudden scream was heard from Lady Angelica Headingham, who caught hold of Mr Barclay's arm, and writhed as if in agony.

"Good heavens! What is the matter?" cried Mr Barclay.

"Oh! cramp! cramp! horrid cramp! in my foot —in my leg!"

"Rest upon me," said Mr Barclay, "and stretch your foot out."

"Torture!—I can't." It was impossible that she could stand without the support of both gentlemen.

"Carry me to the sofa—there!"

When they had carried her out of the Oriel to the sofa in the library, and when her ladyship found that she had excited sufficient interest, and drawn the attention of Mr Barclay away from Caroline, her ladyship began to grow a little better, and by graceful degrees recovered the use of her pretty limbs. And now, as she had reason to be satisfied with the degree of feeling which Mr Barclay had involuntarily shown for her when he thought she was suffering, if her vanity had had any touch of gratitude or affection mixed with it, she would not have taken this moment to torment the heart of the man—the only man who ever really loved her; but all in her was vanity: she began to coquet with Sir James Harcourt—she let him put on her sandal and tie its strings—she sent him for her shawl, for she had a mind to walk in the park—and when Mr Barclay offered to attend her, and when she found that Caroline and the Lady Pembrokes were going, she had a mind not to go, and she resolved to detain them all in admiration of her. She took her shawl from Sir James, and throwing it round her in graceful drapery, she asked him if he had ever seen any of Lady Hamilton's attitudes, or rather scenic representations with shawl drapery.

Yes, he had; but he should be charmed to see them in perfection from her ladyship.

Notwithstanding the hint Mrs Hungerford had given about *exhibiting*, and notwithstanding Mr Barclay's grave looks, Lady Angelica, avowedly to please Sir James Harcourt, consented to give the exhibition of the passions. She ran into the Oriel—attired herself in a most appropriate manner, and appeared first in the character of Fear—then of Hope: she acted admirably, but just as

"Hope enchanted, smiled, and waved her golden hair,"

her ladyship's auburn tresses caught on some ornament in the room. The whole fabric was raised a little from the fair head on which it seemed to grow—Caroline sprang forward instantly, and dexterously disentangling the accomplished actress, relieved her from this imminent and awkward peril.

"I am sure I'm exceedingly obliged to Miss Caroline Percy," said her ladyship, adjusting her head-dress. "There, now, all's right again—thank you, Miss Percy—don't trouble yourself, pray."

The heartless manner of these thanks, and her ladyship's preparing to go on again with her exhibition, so displeased and disgusted Mr Barclay, that he left her to the flattery of Sir James Harcourt, and, sighing deeply, quitted the room.

Lady Angelica, proud of showing her power of tormenting a man of his sense, smiled victorious; and, in a half whisper, said to Mrs Hungerford, "Exit Mr Barclay, jealous, because he thinks I did the shawl attitudes for Sir James, and not for him—Poor man! he's very angry; but he'll ride it off—or I'll smile it off."

Mrs Hungerford shook her head. When her ladyship's exhibition had finished, and when Sir James had continued repeating, either with his words or his looks, "Charming! Is not she charming?" till the time of dressing, an hour to which he was always punctual, he retired to his toilette, and Lady Angelica found herself alone with Mrs Hungerford.

"Oh! how tired I am!" cried her ladyship, throwing herself on a sofa beside her. "My spirits do so wear me out: I am sure I'm too much for you, Mrs Hungerford; I am afraid you think me a strange wild creature: but, dear madam, why do you look so grave?"

"My dear Lady Angelica Headingham," said Mrs

Hungerford, in a serious but affectionate tone, laying her hand upon Lady Angelica's as she spoke, "I was, you know, your mother's most intimate friend—I wish to be yours. Considering this and my age, I think I may venture to speak to you with more freedom than any one else now living could with propriety—it grieves me to see such a woman as you are spoiling by adulation."

"Thank you, my dear Mrs Hungerford! and now do tell me all my faults," said Lady Angelica: "only first let me just say, that if you are going to tell me that I am a coquette, and a fool, I know I am—both—and I can't help it; and I know I am what some people call *odd*—but I would not for the world be a common character."

"Then you must not be a coquette," said Mrs Hungerford, "for that *is* a common character—the hackneyed character of every play, of every novel. And whatever is common is vulgar, you know: airs and affectation are common and paltry—throw them aside, my dear Lady Angelica; disdain flattery, prove that you value your own esteem above vulgar admiration, and then, with such beauty and talents as you possess, you may be, what you admire, an uncommon character."

"*May* be!" repeated Lady Angelica in a voice of vexation. "Well, I know I have a hundred faults; but I never before heard anybody, friend or enemy, deny that I *am* an uncommon character. Now, Mrs Hungerford, do you know any one of a more uncommon character?"

"Yes," said Mrs Hungerford, smiling, "I know the thing that's most uncommon,

> 'I know a reasonable woman,
> Handsome and witty, yet a friend.'"

"Oh! your friend Miss Caroline Percy, I suppose.

Well! though she is so great a favourite of yours, I must say that, to my fancy, she is as little of an uncommon character as any girl I ever saw—uncommon beauty, I acknowledge, she has, though not the style of face I like."

"And an uncommonly good understanding, without one grain of envy, affectation, or vanity," said Mrs Hungerford.

"Vanity!—Stay till you see her tried," said Lady Angelica; "stay till she has gone through one winter's campaign in London: stay till she has as many admirers as——"

"As you have," said Mrs Hungerford, smiling. "She seems to be in a fair way of soon trying that experiment to your satisfaction."

A considerable pause ensued; during which many conflicting passions appeared in Lady Angelica's countenance.

"After all, Mrs Hungerford," resumed she, "do you think Mr Barclay is really attached to me?"

"I think he *was* really attached to you, and strongly: but you have been doing all you can to weaken and destroy his attachment, I fear."

"Fear nothing! I fear nothing," exclaimed Lady Angelica, "now you tell me, dear Mrs Hungerford, that you do not doubt the *reality* of his love: all the rest I will answer for—trust to me, I know my game."

Mrs Hungerford sighed; and replied, "I am old, have stood by, and seen this game played and lost so often, and by as able players as Lady Angelica Headingham—take care—remember I warn you."

Miss Caroline Percy came into the room at this instant—Lady Angelica went to her toilette to repair her charms.

Chapter xvii.

WHILST Mrs Hungerford was wasting her good advice upon Lady Angelica, Sir James Harcourt at his toilette received this day's letters, which he read, as usual, while his hair was dressing. Some of these letters were from creditors, who were impatient to hear when his *advantageous marriage* would be concluded, or when he would obtain that place which had been so long promised. The place at court, as he was this post informed by a *private*, *very confidential* letter, under a Government cover and huge seal, from his intimate friend, my Lord Skreene, ministers had found themselves under the unfortunate necessity of giving away, to secure three votes on a certain Cabinet question.

Sir James threw the letter from him, without reading the rest of his dear friend's official apologies: "So, the place at court is out of the question—a wife must be my last resource," thought he, "but how to bring her to the point?"

Sir James knew that though he was now in high favour, he might, at some sudden turn of caprice, be discarded or deserted by his fair one, as had been the fate of so many of his predecessors. The ruling passion, vanity, must be touched, and the obvious means of awakening jealousy were in his power. He determined to pay attentions to Miss Caroline Percy: his experience in the tactics of gallantry supplying the place of knowledge of the human heart, he counterfeited the symptoms of a new passion, and acted "The Inconstant" so well, that Lady Angelica had no doubt of his being what he appeared. She was not prepared for this turn of fate, well as she thought she knew her game, and at this unlucky moment, just when she wanted to play off Sir James against Mr

Barclay—and in an old castle in the country too, where no substitute was to be had!

Her ladyship was the more vexed, because Mrs Hungerford must see her distress. Unused to anything that opposed her wishes, she lost all temper, and every word and look manifested resentment and disdain towards her innocent and generous rival. In this jealousy, as there was no mixture of love to colour and conceal its nature, it could not pass for refinement of sentiment—it bore no resemblance to anything noble—it must have been detected, even by a less penetrating and less interested observer than Mr Barclay. His eyes were now completely opened.

In the meantime, Caroline's character, the more it was brought into light, the more its value, goodness, and purity appeared. In the education of a beauty, as of a prince, it is essential early to inspire an utter contempt of flattery, and to give the habit of observing, and consequently the power of judging, of character.

Caroline, on this occasion, when, perhaps, some little temptation might have been felt by some ladies, remembered her own prayer against coquetry—her manner towards Sir James was free from all possibility of reproach or misconstruction: and by simply and steadily adhering to the truth, and going the straight road, she avoided all the difficulties in which she would have been involved, had she deviated but for a moment into any crooked path.

But to return to Lady Angelica Headingham. She was pleased to see Sir James Harcourt disconcerted, and delighted to see him mortified. Her ladyship's disdainful manner towards Caroline was thrown aside,

"And all the cruel language of the eye"

changed at once. Lady Angelica acknowledged that no one could show more magnanimity than Miss

Caroline Percy had displayed in her conduct to Sir James Harcourt. This speech was made of course to be repeated, and when Caroline heard it she could not help smiling at the word magnanimity, which sounded to her rather too grand for the occasion.

Sir James Harcourt finding himself completely foiled in his schemes, and perceiving that the parties were closing and combining in a manner which his knowledge of the world had not taught him to foresee, endeavoured with all possible address and expedition to make his separate peace with Lady Angelica. Her ladyship, however, was proud to show that she had too much sense and spirit to accept again the homage of this recreant knight. He had not time to sue for pardon—his adventure might have ended in a jail; so forthwith he took his departure from Hungerford Castle, undetermined whether he should again haste to court to beg a place, or bend his course to the city, there to barter his fashion against the solid gold of some merchant, rolling in his Majesty's coin, who might be silly enough to give his daughter, for a bow, to a courtier without a shilling. On one point, however, Sir James was decided—betide him weal, betide him wo—that his next mistress should neither be a wit, nor a beauty, nor yet a patroness.

After the departure of the baronet, the Lady Angelica expected to find her remaining lover at her feet, in transports of joy and gratitude for this haughty dismissal of his rival. No such thing: Mr Barclay seemed disposed to throw himself at the feet of another, and of the last person in the world at whose feet her ladyship could bear to think of seeing him. Yet if she had even now taken Mrs Hungerford's friendly warning, she might still have saved herself from mortification; but she was hurried on by her evil genius—the spirit of coquetry.

She had promised to pay a visit this summer to an aunt of Mr Barclay, Lady B——, who lived in Leicestershire. And now, when everything was arranged for her reception, Lady Angelica changed her mind, and told Mr Barclay that she could not go, that she had just received letters from town, from several of her fashionable friends, who were setting out for Weymouth, and who insisted upon her meeting them there—and there was a delightful Miss Kew, a protégée of hers, who was gone to Weymouth in the hope and trust that her ladyship would *produce* her and her new novel at the reading parties which Lady Angelica had projected. She declared that she could not possibly disappoint Miss Kew; besides, she had promised to carry Mr Seebright to Weymouth, to introduce him and his poem to her friends—his subscription and the success of his poem entirely depended upon her going to Weymouth—she could not possibly disappoint *him*.

Mr Barclay thought more of his own disappointment—and said so: at which her ladyship rejoiced, for she wished to make this a trial of her power; and she desired rather that her reasons should not appear valid, and that her excuses should not be reasonable, on purpose that she might compel Mr Barclay to submit to her caprice, and carry him off in triumph in her train.

She carelessly repeated that Leicestershire was out of the question at this time, but that Mr Barclay might attend her, if he pleased.

But it did not please him: he did not think that his aunt was properly treated, and he preferred her to all the bel-esprits and fine ladies who were going to Weymouth—her charming self excepted.

She depended too much on the power of that charming self. Mr Barclay, whose bands she had

gradually loosened, now made one resolute effort, asserted and recovered his liberty. He declared that to Weymouth he could not have the honour of attending her: if her ladyship thought the claims and feelings of her protégées of greater consequence than his, if she held herself more bound by the promises she had given to Mr Seebright, Miss Kew, or any of her bel-esprit friends, than by those with which she had honoured his aunt, he could not presume to dispute her pleasure, or further to press Lady B.'s request; he could only lament—and submit.

Lady Angelica flattered herself that this was only a bravado, or a temporary ebullition of courage, but, to her surprise and dismay, Mr Barclay continued firm, calm, and civil. His heart now turned to the object on which his understanding had long since told him it should fix. He saw that Miss Caroline Percy was all that could make him happy for life, if he could win her affections; but of the possibility of succeeding he had great doubts. He had, to be sure, some circumstances in his favour: he was of a good family, and had a considerable fortune; in a worldly point of view he was a most advantageous match for Caroline Percy, but he knew that an establishment was not the *first* object, either with her, or with her parents; neither could he wish that any motives of interest should operate in his favour. His character, his principles, were good, and he had reason to believe that Mr Percy was impressed with a highly favourable opinion of his good sense and general understanding. Caroline talked to him always as if she liked his conversation, and felt esteem for his character; but the very freedom and ease of her manner showed that she had no thoughts of him. He was many years older than Caroline: it did not amount to an absolute disparity, but it was an alarming difference. Mr

Barclay, who estimated himself with perfect impartiality and candour, was sensible that though his temper was good, yet that it was somewhat fastidious, and though his manners were polite, yet they were reserved—they wanted that amenity, gaiety, and frankness, which might be essential to win and keep a lady's heart. The more his love, the more doubts of his own deserts increased; but at last he determined to try his fate. He caught a glimpse of Caroline one morning as she was drawing in the Oriel. Her sister and the two Lady Pembrokes were in the library, and he thought he was secure of finding her alone.

"May I beg the favour of a few minutes"—he began with a voice of much emotion as he entered the room; but he stopped short at the sight of Lady Angelica.

In spite of all the rouge she wore, her ladyship's change of colour was striking. Her lips trembled and grew pale. Mr Barclay's eyes fixed upon her for one moment with astonishment, then turning calmly away, he addressed himself to Caroline, his emotion recurring, though he merely spoke to her of a drawing which she was examining, and though he only said, "Is this yours?"

"Yes, Lady Angelica has just given it to me; it is one of her drawings—a view of Weymouth."

"Very beautiful," said Mr Barclay coldly—"a view of Weymouth."

"Where I hope to be the day after to-morrow," cried Lady Angelica, speaking in a hurried, piqued, and haughty voice—"I am dying to get to Weymouth. Mr Barclay, if you have any letters for your friends there, I shall be happy to carry them. Only let them be given to my woman in time," added her ladyship, rising; "and now I must go and say *vivace!*

presto! prestissimo! to her preparations. Well, have you any commands?"

"No commands—but my best wishes for your ladyship's health and happiness, whenever and wherever you go."

Lady Angelica sunk down upon her seat—made a strong effort to rise again—but was unable. Caroline, without appearing to take any notice of this, turned to Mr Barclay, and said, "Will you have the goodness now to give me the book which you were so kind as to promise me?"

Mr Barclay went in search of it. Caroline proceeded with her drawing, gave Lady Angelica time to recover, and left her the hope that her perturbation had not been noticed. Her ladyship, as soon as she could, left the room, repeating that she had some orders to give for her departure. Caroline waited some time in vain for Mr Barclay and his book. Afterwards, as she was going upstairs, she was met by Rosamond, who, with a face full of mystery, whispered, "Caroline, my father wants you this instant in my mother's dressing-room—Mr Barclay," added she, in a low voice, and nodding her head, "Oh! I see you know what I mean—I knew how it would be—I said so last night. Now go to my father, and you will hear all the particulars."

Caroline heard from her father the confirmation of Rosamond's intelligence, and she received from him and from her mother the kind assurance that they would leave her entirely at liberty to accept or refuse Mr Barclay, according as her own judgment and feelings might dictate. They said, that though it might be, in point of fortune, a highly advantageous match, and though they saw nothing to which they could object in his character, understanding, and temper, yet they should not attempt to influence her in his favour.

They begged her to decide entirely for herself, and to consult only her own happiness.

"All I insist upon, my dear daughter, is, that you should, without any idle or unjust generosity, consider first and solely what is for your own happiness."

"And for Mr Barclay's," said Caroline.

"And for Mr Barclay's, as far as you are concerned: but, remember the question he asks you is, whether you can love him, whether you will marry him, not whether you would advise him to love or marry somebody else. Don't I know all that passes in your mind?"

"Not all, perhaps," said Caroline, "nor can I tell it you, because it is another person's secret; therefore, I am sure you will not question me further: but since you are so kind as to trust to my judgment, trust to it entirely, when I assure you that I will, without any idle or unjust generosity, consider, principally, what is for my own happiness."

"I am satisfied," said Mr Percy, "no—one thing more: without meaning or wishing to penetrate into any other person's affairs, I have a full right to say to my daughter all that may be necessary to assist her in deciding on a point the most material to her happiness. Now, Caroline," continued her father, looking away from her, "observe, I do not endeavour, from my knowledge of your countenance, even to guess whether what I imagine is fact; but I state to you this supposition — suppose you had been told that another lady is attached to Mr Barclay?"

"I never was told so," interrupted Caroline, "but I have discovered it by accident——No, I have said too much—I do not think *that person* is attached to him, but that she might easily have become attached, if this proposal had been made to her instead of to me; and I think that their two characters are exactly suited

to each other—much better suited than mine could be to Mr Barclay, or his to me: she has wit and imagination, and great vivacity; he has judgment, prudence, and solid sense: in each there is what would compensate for what is wanting in the other, and both together would make a happy union."

"My dear Caroline," said her father, "I must put you upon your guard against the too easy faith of a sincere affectionate heart. I am really surprised that you, who have always shown such good judgment of character, should now be so totally mistaken as to think a woman capable of a real love who is merely acting a part from vanity and coquetry."

"Vanity! coquetry!" repeated Caroline: "nobody upon earth is more free from vanity and coquetry than——Surely you do not imagine I am thinking of Lady Angelica Headingham?—Oh! no; I have no compassion for her; I know that if she suffers from losing Mr Barclay, it will be only from losing 'the dear delight of giving pain,' and I should be very sorry she ever again enjoyed that delight at Mr Barclay's expense. I assure you, I am not thinking of Lady Angelica."

Both Mr and Mrs Percy were in doubt whether Caroline was thinking of her sister Rosamond or of her friend Lady Mary Pembroke; but without attempting to discover, they only repeated that, whoever the person in question might be, or however amiable or dear to Caroline, she ought not to let this idea interfere with her own happiness, or influence her in giving an answer to Mr Barclay's proposal, which she ought either to accept or decline, according as her own feelings and judgment should decide.—"If you wish to take time to decide, your father and I will make Mr Barclay clearly understand that he is not to consider this as any encouragement; and as to the rest," added

Mrs Percy, "when you are sure that you mean right, and that you do right, you will not, my dear Caroline, I hope, be deterred from determining upon what is best for your own happiness, merely by the weak fear of what idle foolish people will say about an affair in which they have no concern."

Caroline assured her mother that no such weak fear acted upon her mind; and that in any case, where she had the least doubt whether she could like a person as a husband or not, she should certainly ask for time to consider, before she would give an answer; but that, with respect to Mr Barclay, she had had sufficient opportunities of seeing and judging of him in the character of a lover, whilst he had been the admirer of Lady Angelica; that she fully appreciated his good qualities, and was grateful for his favourable opinion; but that she felt perfectly certain that she did not and could not love him; and therefore she desired, as soon as possible, to put him out of the pain of suspense, to prevent him from having the mortification of showing himself the admirer of one by whom he must ultimately be refused; and to leave him at liberty to turn his thoughts elsewhere, to some person to whom he was better suited, and who was better suited to him.

Mr Barclay had made Mrs Hungerford alone his confidant. As to Lady Angelica Headingham, he thought that her ladyship could not be in any doubt of the state of his affections as far as she was concerned, and that was all she had a right to know. He never had actually declared his passion for her, and his attentions had completely ceased since the determination she had made to break her engagement with his aunt; but Lady Angelica had still imagined that he would not be able to bring himself to part with her for ever, and she trusted that, even at the moment of getting into her carriage, she might prevail upon

him to forget his wrongs, and might at last carry him off. These hopes had been checked, and for a moment overthrown, by Mr Barclay's appearance this morning in the Oriel; the emotion with which she saw him speak to Caroline, and the indifference with which she heard him wish her ladyship health and happiness at Weymouth, or wherever she went, for an instant convinced her of the truth. But obstinate vanity recurred to the hope that he was not yet irreclaimable, and under this persuasion she hurried on the preparations for her departure, impatient for the moment of crisis—of triumph.

The moment of crisis arrived—but not of triumph. Lady Angelica Headingham's landau came to the door. But *trunks packed and corded* gave no pang to her former lover—Mrs Hungerford did not press her to stay—Mr Barclay handed her into the carriage—she stooped to conquer, so far as to tell him, that, as she had only Mr Seebright and her maid, she could give him a seat in her carriage, if he would come to Weymouth, and that she would thence, in a fortnight at farthest, go to his aunt, dear Lady B——, in Leicestershire. But all in vain—she saw it would not do—bid her servants shut the carriage-door—desired Mr Seebright to draw up the glass, and, with a look of angry contempt towards Mr Barclay, threw herself back on the seat to conceal the vexation which she could not control, and drove away for ever from irreclaimable lovers and lost friends. We do not envy Mr Seebright his trip to Weymouth, with his patroness in this humour; but without troubling ourselves further to inquire what became of her, we leave her

"To flaunt, and go down a disregarded thing."

Rosamond seemed to think that if Caroline married

Mr Barclay, the dénouement would be too near, too clear, and commonplace: she said that in this case Caroline would just be married, like anybody else, to a man with a good fortune, good character, good sense, and everything very good, but nothing extraordinary, and she would be settled at Mr Barclay's seat in Leicestershire, and she would be Mrs Barclay, and, perhaps, happy enough, but nothing extraordinary.

This plain view of things, and this positive termination of all hope of romance, did not please Rosamond's imagination. She was relieved, when at last Caroline surprised her with the assurance that there was no probability of Mr Barclay's succeeding in his suit. "And yet," said Caroline, "if I were compelled at this moment to marry, of all men I have ever yet seen, Mr Barclay is the person to whom I could engage myself with the least reluctance—the person with whom I think I should have the best security for happiness."

Rosamond's face again lengthened. "If that is the case," said she, "though you have no intention of marrying him at present, you will, I suppose, be *reasoned into* marrying him in time."

"No," said Caroline, "for I cannot be reasoned into loving him."

"There's my own dear Caroline," cried Rosamond: "I was horribly afraid that this man of sense would have convinced you that esteem was quite sufficient without love."

"Impossible!" said Caroline. "There must be some very powerful motive that could induce me to quit my family: I can conceive no motive sufficiently powerful, except love."

Rosamond was delighted.

"For what else *could* I marry?" continued Caro-

line: "I, who am left by the kindest of parents freely to my own choice—could I marry for a house in Leicestershire? or for a barouche and four? on Lady Jane Granville's principles for *an establishment?* or on the *missy* notion of being married, and having a house of my own, and ordering my own dinner?—Was this your notion of me?" said Caroline, with a look of such surprise, that Rosamond was obliged to fall immediately to protestations, and appeals to common sense. "How was it possible she could have formed such ideas!"

"Then why were you so much surprised and transported just now, when I told you that no motive but love could induce me to marry?"

"I don't recollect being surprised—I was only delighted. I never suspected that you could marry without love, but I thought that you and I might differ as to the quantity—the degree."

"No common degree of love, and no common love, would be sufficient to induce me to marry," said Caroline.

"Once, and but once, before in your life, you gave me the idea of your having such an exalted opinion of love," replied Rosamond.

"But to return to Mr Barclay," said Caroline. "I have, as I promised my father that I would, consulted in the first place my own heart, and considered my own happiness. He appears to me incapable of that enthusiasm which rises either to the moral or intellectual sublime. I respect his understanding, and esteem his principles; but in conversing with him, I always feel—and in passing my life with him, how much more should I feel!—that there is a want of the higher qualities of the mind. He shows no invention, no genius, no magnanimity—nothing heroic, nothing great, nothing which could waken

sympathy or excite that strong attachment, which I think that I am capable of feeling for a superior character—for a character at once good and great."

"And where upon earth are you to find such a man? Who is romantic now?" cried Rosamond. "But I am very glad that you *are* a little romantic; I am glad that you have in you a touch of human absurdity, else how could you be my sister, or how could I love you as I do?"

"I am heartily glad that you love me, but I am not sensible of my present immediate claim to your love by my touch of human absurdity," said Caroline, smiling. "What did I say, that was absurd or romantic?"

"My dear, people never think their own romance absurd. Well! granted that you are not romantic, since that is a point which I find I must grant before we can go on—now, tell me, was Mr Barclay very sorry when you refused him?" said Rosamond.

"I dare not tell you that there is yet no danger of his breaking his heart," said Caroline.

"So I thought," cried Rosamond, with a look of ineffable contempt. "I thought he was not a man to break his heart for love. With all his sense, I dare say he will go back to his Lady Angelica Headingham. I should not be surprised if he went after her to Weymouth to-morrow."

"I should," said Caroline; "especially as he has just ordered his carriage to take him to his aunt, Lady B——, in Leicestershire."

"Oh! poor man!" said Rosamond, "now I do pity him."

"Because he is going to his aunt?"

"No, Caroline—you are very cruel—because I am sure he is very much touched and disappointed by your refusal. He cannot bear to see you again. Poor,

poor Mr Barclay! I have been shamefully ill-natured. I hope I did not prejudice your mind against him—I'll go directly and take leave of him—poor Mr Barclay!"

Rosamond, however, returned a few minutes afterwards, to complain that Mr Barclay had not made efforts enough to persuade Caroline to listen to him.

"If he had been warmly in love, he would not so easily have given up hope.

> 'None, without hope, e'er loved the brightest fair;
> But Love can hope, where Reason should despair.'

That, I think, is perfectly true," said Rosamond.

Never—begging Rosamond and the poet's pardon—never—except where reason is very weak, or where the brightest fair has some touch of the equivocating fiend. Love, let poets and lovers say what they will to the contrary, can no more subsist without hope than flame can exist without fuel. In all the cases cited to prove the contrary, we suspect that there has been some inaccuracy in the experiment, and that by mistake, a little, a very little hope has been admitted. The slightest portion, a quantity imperceptible to common observation, is known to be quite sufficient to maintain the passion; but a total exclusion of hope secures its extinction.

Mr Barclay's departure was much regretted by all at Hungerford Castle, most, perhaps, by the person who expressed that regret the least, Lady Mary Pembroke—who now silently enjoyed the full chorus of praise that was poured forth in honour of the departed. Lady Mary's common mode of enjoying the praise of her friends was not in silence; all she thought and felt usually came to her lips with the ingenuous vivacity of youth and innocence. Caroline had managed so well by not managing at all, that Lady

Mary, far from guessing the real cause of Mr Barclay's sudden departure, repeatedly expressed surprise that her aunt Hungerford did not press him to stay a little longer; and once said she wondered how Mr Barclay *could* leave Hungerford Castle whilst Caroline was there; that she had begun to think he had formed an attachment which would do him more honour than his passion for Lady Angelica Headingham, but that she feared he would have a relapse of that fit of folly, and that it would at last end fatally in marriage.

Mrs Hungerford smiled at the openness with which her niece told her conjectures, and at the steadiness with which Caroline kept Mr Barclay's secret, by saying no more than just the thing she ought. "The power of keeping a secret is very different from the habit of dissimulation. You would convince me of this, if I had doubted it," said Mrs Hungerford to Caroline. "Now that the affair is settled, my dear, I must insist upon your praising me, as I have praised you for discretion. I hope I never influenced your decision by word or look, but I will now own to you that I was very anxious that you should decide precisely as you have done. Mr Barclay is a sensible man, an excellent man, one who will make any amiable woman he marries happy. I am convinced of it, or I should not, as I do, wish to see him married to my niece—yet I never thought him suited to you. Yours is a character without pretension, yet one which, in love and marriage, would not, I believe, be easily satisfied, would require great qualities, a high tone of thought and action, a character superior and lofty as your own."

Mrs Hungerford paused, and seem lost in thought. Caroline felt that this lady had seen deeply into her mind. This conviction, beyond all praise, and all

demonstrations of fondness, increases affection, confidence, and gratitude, in strong and generous minds. Caroline endeavoured, but could not well express in words what she felt at this instant.

"My dear," said Mrs Hungerford, "we know that we are speaking plain truth to each other—we need no flowers of speech—I understand you, and you understand me. We are suited to each other—yes, notwithstanding the difference of age, and a thousand other differences, we are suited to each other. This possibility of a friendship between youth and age is one of the rewards Heaven grants to the early and late cultivation of the understanding and of the affections. Late as it is with me in life, I have not, thank God, survived my affections. How can I ever, whilst I have such children, such friends!" After a pause of a few moments of seemingly pleasurable reflections, Mrs Hungerford continued, "I have never considered friendship as but a name—as a mere worldly commerce of interest; I believe in disinterested affection, taking the word *disinterested* in its proper sense; and I have still, believe me, the power of sympathising with a *young* friend—such a young friend as Caroline Percy. Early as it is with her in life, she has so cultivated her understanding, so regulated her mind, that she cannot consider friendship merely as a companionship in frivolous amusement, or a mixture of gossiping confidences and idle sentiment; therefore, I am proud enough to hope that she can and will be the friend of such an old woman as I am."

"It would be the pride of my life to have—to deserve such a friend," cried Caroline: "I feel all the condescension of this kindness. I know you are much too good to me. I am afraid you think too highly of me. But Mrs Hungerford's praise does not operate

like flattery: though it exalts me in my own opinion, it shall not make me vain; it excites my ambition to be—all she thinks me."

"You *are* all I think you," said Mrs Hungerford; "and that you may hereafter be something yet nearer than a friend to me is the warmest wish of my heart ——But, no, I will not indulge myself in expressing that wish. Such wishes are never wise where we have no power, no right to act—such wishes often counteract their own object—anticipations are always imprudent. But——about my niece, Lady Mary Pembroke. I particularly admire the discretion, still more than the kindness, with which you have acted with respect to her and Mr Barclay—you have left things to their natural course. You have not by any imprudent zeal or generosity hazarded a word that could hurt the delicacy of either party. You seem to have been fully aware that wherever the affections are concerned, the human mind is most tenacious of what one half of the philosophers in the world will not allow to exist, and the other half cannot define. Influenced as we all are every moment in our preferences and aversions, sometimes imperceptibly, sometimes avowedly, by the most trifling and often the silliest causes, yet the wisest of us start, and back, and think it incumbent on our pride, in love-affairs, to resist the slightest interference, or the best advice, from the best friends. What! love upon compulsion! No—Jupiter is not more tenacious of his thunderbolt than Cupid is of his arrows. Blind as he is, none may presume to direct the hand of that little urchin."

Here the conversation was interrupted by the entrance of a servant, who brought the post-bag, with many letters for Mrs Hungerford.

Chapter xviii.

THE arrival of the post was at this time an anxious moment to Mrs Hungerford, as she had so many near relations and friends in the army and navy. This day brought letters, with news that lighted up her countenance with dignified joy, one from Captain Hungerford, her second son, ten minutes after an action at sea with the French.

"Dear Mother,—English victorious, of course; for particulars, see Gazette. In the cockle-shell I have could do nothing worth mentioning, but am promised a ship soon, and hope for opportunity to show myself worthy to be your son.

"F. Hungerford."

"I hope I am grateful to Providence for such children!" cried Mrs Hungerford.

Mrs Mortimer darted upon Captain Hungerford's name in the Gazette—"And I cannot refrain from mentioning to your lordships the gallant manner in which I was seconded by Captain Hungerford."

"Happy mother that I am! And more happiness still—a letter also from my colonel! Thanks of commanding officer—gallant conduct abroad—leave of absence for three weeks—and will be here to-morrow!"

This news spread through the castle in a few minutes, and the whole house was in motion and in joy.

"What is the matter?" said Rosamond, who had been out of the room when the colonel's letter was read. "As I came downstairs, I met I can't tell how many servants running different ways, with faces of delight. I do believe Colonel Hungerford is come."

"Not come, but coming," said Mrs Hungerford;

"and I am proud that you, my friends, should see what a sensation the first sound of his return makes in his own *home*. There it is, after all, that you may best judge what a man really is."

Everything conspired to give Caroline a favourable idea of Colonel Hungerford. He arrived—and his own appearance and manners, far from contradicting, fully justified all that his friends had said. His appearance was that of a soldier and a gentleman, with a fine person and striking countenance, with the air of command, yet without presumption; not without a consciousness of his own merit, but apparently with only a consciousness sufficient to give value and grace to his deference for others. To those he respected or loved, his manner was particularly engaging; and the appropriate attentions he paid to each of his friends proved that their peculiar tastes, their characteristic merits, and their past kindnesses, were ever full in his remembrance. To his mother his grateful affection, and the tender reverence he showed, were quite touching; and the high opinion he had of her character, and the strong influence she held over his mind, he seemed proud to avow in words and actions. To his sister Mortimer, in a different but not less pleasing manner, his affection appeared in a thousand little instances, which the most polite courtiers, with the most officious desire to please, could not without the happy inspiration of truth have invented. There were innumerable slight strokes in his conversation with his sister which marked the pleasure he felt in the recollection of their early friendship, allusions to trivial passages in the history of their childhood, which none of the important scenes in which he had since been engaged had effaced from his mind; and at other times a playful carelessness, that showed the lightness, the expanding freedom of heart, which can be felt only in the

perfect confidence and intimacy of domestic affection. In his manner towards his cousins, the Lady Pembrokes, who, since he had last seen them, had grown up from children into fine young women, there were nice differences; with all the privileged familiarity of relationship he met the sprightly frankness of Lady Mary, and by a degree of delicate tender respect put the retiring sensitive timidity of Lady Elizabeth at ease. None of these shades of manner were lost upon Caroline's discriminating observation. For some time after his arrival, the whole attention of every individual, at Hungerford Castle, was occupied by Colonel Hungerford. All were alternately talking of him or listening to him. The eagerness which everybody felt to hear from him accounts of public and private affairs, and the multitude and variety of questions by which he was assailed, drew him out continually; so that he talked a great deal, yet evidently more to gratify others than himself. He was always unwilling to engross the conversation, and sometimes anxious to hear from his mother and sister of domestic occurrences; but he postponed his own gratification, and never failed to satisfy general curiosity, even by the repetition of narratives and anecdotes, till he was exhausted. Conscious that he did not wish to make himself the hero of his tale, he threw himself upon the mercy of his friends, or their justice; and without any of the provoking reserve of affected or cowardly humility, he talked naturally of the events in which he had taken a share, and of what concerned himself as well as others. With polite kindness, which gratified them peculiarly, he seemed to take the Percy family, as his mother's friends, directly upon trust as his own: he spoke before them, freely, of all his confidential opinions of men and things. He did them justice in considering

them as safe auditors, and they enjoyed and fully appreciated the value of his various conversation. In his anecdotes of persons, there was always something decidedly characteristic of the individual, or illustrative of some general principle. In his narratives there were strong marks of the Froissart accuracy of detail, which interests by giving the impression of reality, and the proof of having been an eye-witness of the scene; and sometimes scorning detail, he displayed the power of keeping an infinite number of particulars in subordination, and of seizing those large features which gave a rapid and masterly view of the whole. For his profession he felt that enthusiasm which commands sympathy. Whilst he spoke of the British army, those who heard him seemed to see everything, as he did, in a military point of view. Yet his love of military glory had not hardened his heart so as to render him insensible of the evils and sufferings which, alas! it necessarily produces. The natural expression of great feeling and humanity burst from him; but he turned hastily and firmly from the contemplation of evils, which he could not prevent, and would not uselessly deplore. In conversing one day privately with Mr Percy, he showed that bitter and deep philosophic reflections on the horrors and folly of war had passed through his mind, but that he had systematically and resolutely shut them out.

"We are now," said he, "less likely than ever to see the time when all the princes of Europe will sign the good Abbé St Pierre's project for a perpetual peace; and in the meantime, while kingdoms can maintain their independence, their existence, only by superiority in war, it is not for the defenders of their country to fix their thoughts upon 'the price of victory.'"

After explaining the plan of a battle, or the intrigues of a court, Colonel Hungerford would turn with delight to plans of cottages, which his sister Mortimer was drawing for him; and from a map of the seat of war he would go to a map of his own estate, eagerly asking his mother where she would recommend that houses should be built, and consulting her about the characters and merits of those tenants with whom his absence on the Continent had prevented him from becoming acquainted. These and a thousand other little traits showed that his military habits had not destroyed his domestic tastes.

Caroline had taken an interest in the military profession ever since her eldest brother had gone into the army. Colonel Hungerford was seven or eight years older than Godfrey Percy, and had a more formed, steady, and exalted character, with more knowledge, and a far more cultivated understanding; but many expressions, and some points of character, were similar. Caroline observed this, and wished and hoped that, when her brother should have had as many opportunities of improvement as Colonel Hungerford's experience had given him, he might be just such a man. This idea increased the interest she took in observing and listening to Colonel Hungerford. After he had been some time at home, and that every day more and more of his amiable character had been developed, Rosamond said to herself, "This is certainly the man for Caroline, and I suspect she begins to think so. If she does not, I never will forgive her."

One day, when the sisters were by themselves, Rosamond tried to sound Caroline on this subject. She began, as she thought, at a safe distance from her main object. "How very much esteemed and beloved Colonel Hungerford is in his own family!"

"Very much and very deservedly," answered Caroline. She spoke without any hesitation or embarrassment.

Rosamond, rather dissatisfied even with the fulness of the assent to her first proposition, added, "And not only by his own family, but by all who know him."

Caroline was silent.

"It is surprising," continued Rosamond, "that a man who has led a soldier's wandering life should have acquired so much literature, such accurate knowledge, and should have retained such simple and domestic tastes."

Full assent again from Caroline, both of look and voice—but still not the exact look and voice Rosamond desired.

"Do you know, Caroline," continued she, "I think that in several things Colonel Hungerford is very like my brother Godfrey."

"Yes, and in some points, I think, Colonel Hungerford is superior to Godfrey," said Caroline.

"Well, I really think so too," cried Rosamond, "and I am sure Godfrey would think and say so himself. How he would admire Colonel Hungerford, and how desirous, how ambitious he would be to make such a man his friend, his—— in short, I know if Godfrey was here this minute, he would think just as I do about Colonel Hungerford, and about—all other things."

"All other things," repeated Caroline, smiling: "that includes a great deal."

"Yes, it does, that is certain," said Rosamond significantly. "And," continued she, "I know another person of excellent judgment too, who, if I mistake not, is of my way of thinking, of wishing at least, in *some things*, that is a comfort. How Mrs Hungerford does adore her son! And I think she

loves you almost as much." Caroline expressed strong gratitude for Mrs Hungerford's kindness to her, and the warmest return of affection.

"Then, in one word," continued Rosamond, "for out it must come, sooner or later—I think she not only loves you as if you were her daughter, but that ——Now confess, Caroline, did not the idea ever occur to you? And don't you see that Mrs Hungerford wishes *it*?—Oh! that blush is answer enough—I'll say no more—I do not mean to torment or distress—good-bye, I am satisfied."

"Stay, my dear Rosamond, stay one moment, and I will tell you exactly all I think and feel."

"I will stay as long as you please," said Rosamond, "and I thank you for this confidence."

"You have a right to it," said Caroline: "I see, my dear sister, and feel all your kindness towards me, and all Mrs Hungerford's—I see what you both wish."

"There's my own sister Caroline, above all artifice and affectation."

"But—" said Caroline.

"*But*—Oh! Caroline, don't go back—don't palter with us—abide by your own words, and your own character, and don't condescend to any pitiful *buts*."

"You do not yet know the nature of my *but*."

"Nor do I wish to know it, nor will I hear it," cried Rosamond, stopping her ears, "because I know, whatever it is, it will lower you in my opinion. You have fairly acknowledged that Colonel Hungerford possesses every virtue, public and private, that can make him worthy of you—not a single fault on which to ground one possible, imaginable, rational *but*. Temper, manners, talents, character, fortune, family, fame, everything the heart of woman can desire."

"Everything against which the heart of woman should guard itself," said Caroline.

"Guard!—Why guard?—What is it you suspect? What crime can you invent to lay to his charge?"

"I suspect him of nothing. It is no crime—except, perhaps, in your eyes, dear Rosamond," said Caroline, smiling—"no crime not to love me."

"Oh! is that all? Now I understand and forgive you," said Rosamond, "if it is only *that* you fear."

"I do not recollect that I said I *feared* it," said Caroline.

"Well, well—I beg pardon for using that unguarded word—of course your pride must neither hope nor fear upon the occasion; you must quite forget yourself to stone. As you please, or rather as you think proper; but you will allow me to hope and fear for you;—since I have not, thank Heaven! made proud and vain professions of stoicism—have not vowed to throw away the rose, lest I should be pricked by the thorn."

"Laugh, but hear me," said Caroline. "I make no professions of stoicism; it is because I am conscious that I am no stoic that I have endeavoured to guard well my heart.—I have seen and admired all Colonel Hungerford's good and amiable qualities; I have seen and been grateful for all that you and Mrs Hungerford hoped and wished for my happiness—have not been insensible to any of the delightful, any of the romantic circumstances of the *vision;* but I saw it was only a vision—and one that might lead me into waking, lasting misery."

"Misery! lasting! How?" said Rosamond.

"Neither your wishes, nor Mrs Hungerford's, you know, can or ought to decide, or even to influence the event, that is to be determined by Colonel Hungerford's own judgment and feelings, and by mine. In the meantime, I cannot forget that the delicacy, honour,

pride, prudence of our sex, forbid a woman to think of any man, as a lover, till he gives her reason to believe that he feels love for her."

"Certainly," said Rosamond, "but I take it for granted that Colonel Hungerford does love you."

"But why should we take it for granted?" said Caroline: "he has not shown me any preference."

"Why—I don't know, I am not skilled in these matters," said Rosamond—"I am not sure—but I think—and yet I should be sorry to mislead you—at any rate there is no harm in hoping——"

"If there be no harm, there might be much danger," said Caroline: "better not to think of the subject at all, since we can do no good by thinking of it, and may do harm."

After a pause of surprise, disappointment, and reflection, Rosamond resumed: "So I am to understand it to be your opinion, that a woman of sense, delicacy, proper pride, honour, and prudence, must, can, and ought to shut her eyes, ears, understanding, and heart, against all the merit and all the powers of pleasing a man may possess, till said man shall and do make a matrimonial proposal for her in due form—hey! Caroline?"

"I never thought any such thing," answered Caroline, "and I expressed myself very ill if I said any such thing. A woman need not shut her eyes, ears, or understanding to a man's merit—only her heart."

"Then the irresistible charm, the supreme merit, the only merit that can or ought to touch her heart in any man, is the simple or glorious circumstance of his loving her?"

"I never heard that it was a man's supreme merit to love," said Caroline; "but we are not at present inquiring what is a man's but what is a woman's characteristic excellence. And I have heard it said to be a woman's

supreme merit, and grace, and dignity, that her love should *not unsought be won.*"

"That is true," said Rosamond, "perfectly true—in general; but surely you will allow that there may be cases in which it would be difficult to adhere to the letter as well as to the spirit of this excellent rule. Have you never felt—can't you imagine this?"

"I can well imagine it," said Caroline; "fortunately, I have never felt it. If I had not early perceived that Colonel Hungerford was not thinking of me, I might have deceived myself with false hopes: believe me, I never was insensible to his merit."

"But where is the merit or the glory, if there was no struggle, no difficulty?" said Rosamond, in a melancholy tone.

"Glory there is none," said Caroline; "nor do I claim any merit: but is not it something to prevent struggle and difficulty? Is it nothing to preserve my own happiness?"

"Something, to be sure," said Rosamond. "But, on the other hand, you know there is the old proverb, 'Nothing hazard, nothing have.'"

"That is a masculine, not a feminine proverb," said Caroline.

"All I meant to say was, that there is no rule without an exception, as all your philosophers, even the most rigid, allow; and if an exception be ever permitted, surely in such a case as this it might, in favour of such a man as Colonel Hungerford."

"Dangerous exceptions!" said Caroline. "Everybody is too apt to make an exception in such cases in their own favour: that, you know, is the common error of the weak. Oh! my dear sister, instead of weakening, strengthen my mind—instead of trying to raise my enthusiasm, or reproaching me for want of sensibility, tell me that you approve of my exerting all my power

over myself to do that which I think right. Consider what evil I should bring upon myself, if I became attached to a man who is not attached to me; if you saw me sinking, an object of pity and contempt, the victim, the slave of an unhappy passion."

"Oh! my dear, dear Caroline, that could never be ——God forbid; oh! God forbid!" cried Rosamond, with a look of terror: but recovering herself, she added, "This is a vain fear. With your strength of mind, you could never be reduced to such a condition."

"Who can answer for their strength of mind in the second trial, if it fail in the first?" said Caroline. "If a woman once lets her affections go out of her power, how can she afterwards answer for her own happiness?"

"All very right and very true," said Rosamond: "but for a young person, Caroline, I could spare some of this premature reason. If there be some folly, at least there is some generosity, some sensibility often joined with a romantic temper: take care lest you 'mistake reverse of wrong for right,' and in your great zeal to avoid romance, run into selfishness."

"Selfishness!"

"Why, yes—after all, what are these cold calculations about loving or not loving such a character as Colonel Hungerford—what is all this wonderfully long-sighted care of your own individual happiness, but selfishness?—moral, very moral selfishness, I grant."

Caroline coloured, paused, and when she answered, she spoke in a lower and graver tone and manner than usual.

"If it be selfish to pursue, by the best means in my power, and by means which cannot hurt any human being, my own happiness, must I deserve to be called selfish?—Unless a woman be quite unconnected with

others in society, without a family, and without friends —which, I thank God, is not my situation—it is impossible to hazard or to destroy our own happiness by any kind of imprudence, without destroying the happiness of others. Therefore imprudence, call it romance, or what you please, is often want of generosity—want of thought for the happiness of our friends, as well as for our own."

"Well come off!" said Rosamond, laughing: "you have proved, with admirable logic, that prudence is the height of generosity. But, my dear Caroline, do not speak so very seriously, and do not look with such 'sweet austere composure.'—I don't in earnest accuse you of selfishness—I was wrong to use that ugly word; but I was vexed with you for being more prudent than even good old Mrs Hungerford."

At these words tears filled Caroline's eyes. "Dear, kind Mrs Hungerford," she exclaimed, "in the warmth of her heart, in the fulness of her kindness for me, once in her life Mrs Hungerford said perhaps an imprudent word, expressed a wish of which her better judgment may have repented."

"No, no!" cried Rosamond—"her better, her best judgment must have confirmed her opinion of you. She never will repent of that wish. Why should you think she has repented of it, Caroline?"

"Because she must by this time see that there is no probability of that wish being accomplished: she must, therefore, desire that it should be forgotten. And I trust I have acted, and shall always act, as if it were forgotten by me, except as to its kindness—*that* I shall remember while I have life and feeling. But if I had built a romance upon that slight word, consider how much that excellent friend would blame herself, when she found that she had misled me, that she had been the cause of anguish to my heart, that she had lowered

in the opinion of all, even in her own opinion, one she had once so exalted by her approbation and friendship. And oh! consider, Rosamond, what a return should I make for that friendship, if I were to be the occasion of any misunderstanding, any disagreement, between her and her darling son. If *I* were to become the rival of her beloved niece!"

"Rival!—Niece!—How?—Which?" cried Rosamond. "Which?" repeated she eagerly; "I cannot think of anything else, till you say which."

"Suppose Lady Elizabeth."

"The thought never occurred to me—Is it possible?—My dear Caroline, you have opened my eyes ——But are you sure? Then you have acted wisely, rightly, Caroline; and I have as usual been very, *very* imprudent. Forgive what I said about selfishness—I was unjust. You selfish! you, who thought of all your friends, I thought only of you. But tell me, did you think of Lady Elizabeth from the first? Did you see how it would be from the very first?"

"No; I never thought of it till lately, and I am not sure of it yet."

"So you never thought of it till lately, and you are not sure of it yet?—Then I dare say you are mistaken, and wrong, with all your superfluous prudence. I will observe with my own eyes, and trust only my own judgment."

With this laudable resolution Rosamond departed.

The next morning she had an opportunity of observing, and deciding by her own judgment. Lady Elizabeth Pembroke and Caroline had both been copying a picture of Prince Rupert when a boy. They had finished their copies. Mrs Hungerford showed them to her son. Lady Elizabeth's was rather the superior painting. Colonel Hungerford instantly distinguished it, and, in strong terms, expressed his

admiration; but, by some mistake, he fancied that both copies were done by Caroline: she explained to him that that which he preferred was Lady Elizabeth's.

"Yours?" exclaimed Colonel Hungerford, turning to Lady Elizabeth with a look and tone of delighted surprise. Lady Elizabeth coloured, Lady Mary smiled: he forbore adding one word either of praise or observation. Caroline gently relieved Mrs Hungerford's hand from her copy of the picture which she still held.

Rosamond, breathless, looked and looked and waited for something more decisive.

"My mother wished for a copy of this picture," said Lady Elizabeth, in a tremulous voice, and without raising her eyes, "for we have none but a vile daub of him at Pembroke."

"Perhaps my aunt Pembroke would be so good to accept of the original?" said Colonel Hungerford; "and my mother would beg of Lady Elizabeth to give her copy to—our gallery."

"Do, my dear Elizabeth," said Mrs Hungerford. Lady Elizabeth shook her head, yet smiled.

"Do, my dear; you cannot refuse your cousin."

"*Cousin!* there's hope still," thought Rosamond.

"If it were but worthy of his acceptance," said Lady Elizabeth.—Colonel Hungerford, lost in the enjoyment of her self-timidity and retiring grace, quite forgot to say how much he thought the picture worthy of his acceptance.

His mother spoke for him.

"Since Hungerford asks you for it, my dear, you may be certain that he thinks highly of it, for my son never flatters."

"Who? I!—flatter!" cried Colonel Hungerford; "flatter!" added he, in a low voice, with a tenderness

of accent and look, which could scarcely be misunderstood. Nor was it misunderstood by Lady Elizabeth, as her quick varying colour showed. It was well that, at this moment, no eye turned upon Rosamond, for all her thoughts and feeling would have been read in her face.

"Come," cried Lady Mary, "let us have the picture in its place directly—come all of you to the gallery, fix where it shall be hung." Colonel Hungerford seized upon it, and following Lady Elizabeth, accompanied Lady Mary to the gallery. Mrs Hungerford rose deliberately—Caroline offered her arm.

"Yes, my dear child, let me lean upon you."

They walked slowly after the young party—Rosamond followed.

"I am afraid," said Mrs Hungerford, as she leaned more upon Caroline, "I am afraid I shall tire you, my dear."

"Oh! no, no!" said Caroline, "not in the least."

"I am growing so infirm, that I require a stronger arm, a kinder I can never have."

The door of the antechamber, which opened into the gallery, closed after the young people.

"I am not one of those *exigeante* mothers who expect always to have possession of a son's arm," resumed Mrs Hungerford: "the time, I knew, would come, when I must give up my colonel."

"And with pleasure, I am sure, you now give him up, secure of his happiness," said Caroline.

Mrs Hungerford stopped short, and looked full on Caroline, upon whom she had previously avoided to turn her eyes. From what anxiety did Caroline's serene, open countenance, and sweet ingenuous smile, at this instant, relieve her friend! Old as she was,

Mrs Hungerford had quick and strong feelings. For a moment she could not speak—she held out her arms to Caroline, and folded her to her heart.

"Excellent creature!" said she.—"Child of my affections—*that* you must ever be!"

"Oh! Mrs Hungerford! my dear madam," cried Rosamond, "you have no idea how unjust and imprudent I have been about Caroline."

"My love," said Mrs Hungerford, smiling, and wiping tears from her eyes, "I fancy I can form a competent idea of your imprudence from my own. We must all learn discretion from this dear girl—you, early—I, late in life."

"Dear Rosamond, do not reproach yourself for your excessive kindness to me," said Caroline; "in candour and generous feeling, who is equal to you?"

"Kissing one another, I protest," cried Lady Mary Pembroke, opening the door from the gallery, "whilst we were wondering you did not come after us. Aunt Hungerford, you know how we looked for the bow and arrows, and the peaked shoes, with the knee-chains of the time of Edward the Fourth. Well, they are all behind the great armoury press, which Gustavus has been moving to make room for Elizabeth's copy of Prince Rupert. Do come and look at them—but stay, first I have a favour to beg of you, Caroline. I know Gustavus will ask my sister to ride with him this morning, and the flies torment her horse so, and she is such a coward, that she will not be able to listen to a word that is said to her—could you lend her your pretty gentle White Surrey?"

"With pleasure," said Caroline, "and my net."

"I will go and bring it to your ladyship," said Rosamond.

"My ladyship is in no hurry," cried Lady Mary—"don't run away—don't go; it is not wanted yet."

But Rosamond, glad to escape, ran away, saying, "There is some of the fringe off—I must sew it on."

Rosamond, as she sewed on the fringe, sighed—and worked—and wished it was for Caroline, and said to herself, "So it is all over—and all in vain!"

The horses for the happy riding party came to the door. Rosamond ran downstairs with the net; Caroline had it put on her horse, and Lady Elizabeth Pembroke thanked her with such a look of kindness, of secure faith in her friend's sympathy, that even Rosamond forgave her for being happy. But Rosamond could not wish to stay to witness her happiness just at this time; and she was not sorry when her father announced the next day that business required his immediate return home. Lamentations, loud and sincere, were heard from every individual in the castle, especially from Mrs Hungerford, and from her daughter. They were, however, too well bred to persist in their solicitations to have the visit prolonged.

They said they were grateful for the time which had been given to them, and appeared kindly satisfied with their friends' promise to repeat their visit, whenever they could with convenience.

Caroline, tenderly and gratefully attached to Mrs Hungerford, found it very difficult and painful to part from her; the more painful because she feared to express all the affection, admiration, and gratitude she felt for this excllent friend, lest her emotion might be misinterpreted. Mrs Hungerford understood her thoroughly. When she took leave of her, she kissed her at first in silence, and then, by a few strong words, and more by her manner than by her words, expressed her high esteem and affection for her young friend.

Chapter xix.

LETTER FROM DR PERCY TO HIS SISTER ROSAMOND.

"I NEVER told you, my dear Rosamond, that the beautiful Constance was Mr Gresham's daughter; I told you only that I saw her at his house. To the best of my belief she is no relation to him. She is daughter to Mr Gresham's sick partner; and this partner—now, Rosamond, here is coincidence, if not romance, enough to please you—this partner is Mr Panton, the London correspondent of the shipwrecked Dutch merchants, the very Panton & Co. to whom my father lately wrote to recommend Godfrey's friend, young Captain Henry—captain no more. I have not seen him yet; he is invisible, in the counting-house, in the remote city, in ultimate Broad Street, far as pole from pole from me at *Mrs* Panton's fine house in Grosvenor Square.

"But now to have done with an old story, before I begin with a new—I will tell you at once all I know, or probably shall ever know, about Constance. She is sole heiress to her father's fortune, which, on his repeated word, I believe, amounts to hundreds of thousands. She is accomplished and amiable, and, as I told you before, beautiful: but luckily her style of beauty, which is that of one of Rubens' wives, does not particularly strike my fancy. Besides, I would really and truly rather have a profession than be an idle gentleman: I love my profession, and feel ambitious to distinguish myself in it, and to make you all proud of your brother Dr Percy. These general principles are strengthened beyond the possibility of doubt, by the particular circumstances of *the present case*. A young unknown physician, I have been introduced by a friend to this family, and have, in

my medical capacity, been admitted to a degree of familiarity in the house which none shall ever have cause to repent. Physicians, I think, are called upon for scrupulous *good faith*, because, in some respects, they are more trusted in families, and have more opportunities of intimacy, than those of any other profession. I know, my dear Rosamond, you will not suspect me of assuming fine sentiments that are foreign to my real feelings: but I must now inform you, that if I could make myself agreeable and acceptable to Miss Panton, and if it were equally in my will and in my power, yet I should never be, in the language of the market, one shilling the better for her. Her father, a man of low birth, and having, perhaps, in spite of his wealth, suffered from the proud man's contumely, has determined to ennoble his family by means of his only child, and she is not to enjoy his fortune, unless she marry one who has a title. If she unites herself with any man below the rank of a baron's son, he swears she shall never see the colour of sixpence of his money. I understand that a certain Lord Roadster, eldest son of Lord Runnymede, is the present candidate for her favour—or rather for her wealth; and that his lordship is *patronised* by her father. Everything that could be done by the vulgar selfishness and moneyed pride of her father and mother-in-law to spoil this young lady, and to make her consider herself as the first and only object of consequence in this world, has been done—and yet she is not in the least spoiled. Shame to all systems of education! there are some natures so good, that they will go right, where all about them go wrong. My father will not admit this, and will exclaim, Nonsense!—I will try to say something that he will allow to be sense. Miss Panton's own mother was of a good family, and, I am told,

was an amiable woman, of agreeable manners, and a cultivated mind, who had been sacrificed for fortune to this rich city husband. Her daughter's first principles and ideas of manners and morals were, I suppose, formed by her precepts and example. After her mother's death, I know she had the advantage of an excellent and enlightened friend in her father's partner, Mr Gresham, who having no children of his own, took pleasure, at all his leisure moments, in cultivating little Constance. Then the contrast between her father and him, between their ignorance and his enlightened liberality, must have early struck her mind, and thus, I suppose, by observing their faults and follies, she learned to form for herself an opposite character and manners. The present Mrs Panton is only her stepmother. Mrs Panton is a huge, protuberant woman, with a full-blown face, a bay wig, and artificial flowers; talking in an affected little voice when she is in company, and when she has on her *company clothes and manners;* but bawling loud, in a vulgarly broad cockney dialect, when she is at her ease in her own house. She has an inordinate passion for dress, and a *rage* for fine people. I have a chance of becoming a favourite, because I am 'of a good *fammully*,' and Mrs Panton says she knows very well I have been egg and bird in the best company.

"My patient—observe, my patient is the last person of whom I speak or think—is nervous and hypochondriac: but as I do not believe that you have much taste for medical detail, I shall not trouble you with the particulars of this old gentleman's case, but pray for his recovery—for if I succeed in setting him up again, it will set me up. * * * * * For the first time I have this day, after many calls, seen Godfrey's friend, young Mr Henry. He is

handsome, and, as you ladies say, *interesting*. He is particularly gentlemanlike in his manners; but he looks unhappy, and I thought he was reserved towards me; but I have no right yet to expect that he should be otherwise. He spoke of Godfrey with strong affection.

"Yours truly,

"ERASMUS PERCY."

In the care of Mr Panton's health, Dr Percy was now the immediate successor to a certain apothecary of the name of Coxeater, who, by right of flattery, had reigned for many years over the family with arbitrary sway, till he offended the lady of the house by agreeing with her husband upon some disputed point about a julep. The apothecary had a terrible loss of old Panton, for he swallowed more drugs in the course of a week than any man in the city swallows in a year. At the same time, he was so economical of these very drugs, that when Dr Percy ordered the removal from his bedchamber of a range of half full phials, he was actually near crying at the thoughts of the waste of such a quantity of good physic: he finished by turning away a footman for laughing at his ridiculous distress. Panton was obstinate by fits, but touch his fears about his health, and he would be as docile as the *bon vivant* seigneur in Zadig, whose physician had no credit with him when he digested well, but who governed him despotically whenever he had an indigestion; so that he was ready to take anything that could be prescribed, even a basilisk stewed in rose-water. This merchant, retired from business, was now as much engrossed with his health as ever he had been with his wealth.

When Dr Percy was first called in, he found his patient in a lamentable state, in an arm-chair, dying

with the apprehension of having swallowed in a peach a live earwig, which he was persuaded had bred, was breeding, or would breed in his stomach. However ridiculous this fancy may appear, it had taken such hold of the man, that he was really wasting away—his appetite failing as well as his spirits. He would not take the least exercise, or stir from his chair, scarcely move or permit himself to be moved, hand, foot, or head, lest he should disturb or waken this nest of earwigs. Whilst these "*reptiles*" slept, he said, he had rest; but when they wakened, he felt them crawling about and pinching his intestines. The wife had laughed, and the apothecary had flattered in vain: Panton angrily persisted in the assertion that he should die—and then they'd "see who was right." Dr Percy recollected a case, which he had heard from a celebrated physician, of a hypochondriac, who fancied that his intestines were sealed up by a piece of wax which he had swallowed, and who, in this belief, refused to eat or drink anything. Instead of fighting against the fancy, the judicious physician humoured it—showed the patient sealing-wax dissolving in spirit of wine, and then persuaded him to take some of that spirit to produce the same effect. The patient acceded to the reasoning, took the remedy, said that he felt that his intestines were unsealing—were unsealed: but, alas! they had been sealed so long, that they had lost their natural powers and actions, and he died lamenting that his excellent physician had not been called in soon enough.

Dr Percy was more fortunate, for he came in time to kill the earwigs for his patient before they had pinched him to death. Erasmus showed Mr Panton the experiment of killing one of these insects, by placing it within a magic circle of oil, and prevailed upon him to destroy his diminutive enemies with castor oil. When

this *hallucination*, to speak in words of learned length, when this hallucination was removed, there was a still more difficult task, to cure our hypochondriac of the three remote causes of his disease—idleness of mind—indolence of body—and the habit of drinking every day a bottle of *London particular:* to prevail upon him to diminish the quantity per diem was deemed impossible by his wife; especially as Mr Coxeater, the apothecary, had flattered him with the notion, that *to live high* was necessary for a gouty constitution, and that he was gouty.—N.B. He never had the gout in his life.

Mrs Panton augured ill of Dr Percy's success, and Constance grew pale when he touched upon this dangerous subject—the madeira. Yet he had hopes. He recollected the ingenious manner in which Dr Brown * worked upon a Highland chieftain, to induce him to diminish his diurnal quantity of *spirituous potation.* But there was no family pride to work upon, at least no family arms were to be had. Erasmus found a succedaneum, however, in the love of titles and of what are called *fine people.* Lord Runnymede had given Mr Panton a gold beaker, of curious workmanship, on which his lordship's arms were engraved: of this present the citizen was very fond and vain: observing this, Dr Percy was determined to render it subservient to his purposes. He knew they would be right glad of any opportunity of producing and talking of this beaker to all their acquaintance. He therefore advised—no, not *advised;* for with some minds if you *advise* you are not listened to, if you command you are obeyed—he commanded that his patient should have his madeira always decanted into the curious beaker, for certain galvanic advantages that every knowing porter-drinker is aware of: Erasmus emptied a decanter of madeira into the beaker to show that it held

* Vide Life of Dr Brown.

more than a quart. This last circumstance decided Mr Panton to give a solemn promise to abide by the advice of his physician, who seized this auspicious moment to act upon the imagination of his patient, by various medical anecdotes. Mr Panton seemed to be much struck with the account of bottles made of antimonial glass, which continue, for years, to impregnate successive quantities of liquor with the same antimonial virtues. Dr Percy then produced a piece of coloured crystal about the size of a large nut, which he directed his patient to put into the beaker and to add another of these medicated crystals every day, till the vessel should be half full, to increase the power of the drug by successive additions; and by this arrangement, Panton was gradually reduced to half his usual quantity of wine.

Dr Percy's next difficulty was how to supply the purse-full and purse-proud citizen with motive and occupation. Mr Panton had an utter aversion and contempt for all science and literature; he could not conceive that any man "could sit down to read for amusement," but he enjoyed a party of pleasure in a good boat on the water, to one of the *aits* or aislets in the Thames at the right season, to be regaled with eel-pie. One book he had read, and one play he liked—no, not a play, but a pantomime. The book was Robinson Crusoe—the pantomime, Harlequin Friday. He had been heard to say, that if ever he had a villa, there should be in it an island like Robinson Crusoe's; and why not a fortress, a castle, and a grotto? this would be something new; and why should he not have his fancy, and why should not there be *Panton's Folly* as well as any of the thousand *Follies* in England? Surely he was rich enough to have a Folly. His physician cherished this bright idea. Mrs Panton was all this time dying to have a

villa on the Thames. Dr Percy proposed that one should be made on Mr Panton's plan. The villa was bought, and every day the hypochondriac—hypochondriac now no more—went to his villa-Crusoe, where he fussed, and furbished, and toiled at his desert island in the Thames, as hard as ever he laboured to make his *plum* in the counting-house. In *due course* he recovered his health, and, to use his own expression, "became as alert as any man in all England of his inches in the girt, thanks be to Dr Percy!"

We find the following letter from Dr Percy, written, as it appears, some months after his first attendance upon Mr Panton.

"Yes, my dear friends at home, Alfred tells you truth, and does not flatter much. The having set up again this old citizen, who was thought bankrupt in constitution, has done me honour in the city; and, as Alfred assures you, has spread my name through Broad Street, and Fleet Street, and Milk Street, embracing the wild extremes between High Holborn and St Mary Axe.

'And even Islington has heard my fame.'

In earnest, I am getting fast into practice in the city—and Rosamond must not turn up her aristocratic lip at the city—very *good* men, in every sense of the word, some of the best men I know, inhabit what she is pleased to call the wrong end of the town.

"Mr Gresham is unceasing and indefatigable in his kindness to me. I consider it as an instance of this kindness that he has found employment for my poor friend, O'Brien; has made him his porter—a pleasanter place than he had with the painter that pleased nobody: O'Brien sees me almost every day, and rejoices in what he calls my prosperity.

"'Heaven for ever prosper your honour' is the beginning and end of all he says, and, I believe, of all he thinks. Is not it singular, that my first step towards getting into practice should have been prepared by that which seemed to threaten my ruin—the quarrel with Frumpton about O'Brien and the hospital?

"A delicacy strikes me, and begins at this moment, in the midst of my prosperity, to make my pride uneasy.

"I am afraid that my father should say Erasmus gets on by patronage, after all—by the patronage of a poor Irish porter and a rich English merchant.

"Adieu, my dear friends; you must not expect such long letters from me now that I am becoming a busy man. Alfred and I see but little of one another, we live at such a distance, and we are both so gloriously industrious. But we have holiday minutes, when we meet and talk more in the same space of time than any two wise men—I did not say, women—that you ever saw.

"Yours affectionately,
"Erasmus Percy.

"P.S.—I have just recollected that I forgot to answer your question about Mr Henry. I do see him whenever I have time to go, and whenever he will come to Mr Gresham's, which is very seldom. Mr Gresham has begged him repeatedly to come to his house every Sunday, when Henry must undoubtedly be at leisure; yet Mr Henry has been there but seldom since the first six weeks after he came to London. I cannot yet understand whether this arises from pride, or from some better motive. Mr Gresham says he likes what he has seen of him, and well observes, that a young officer, who has lived a gay life in the army, must have great power over his own habits, and something uncommon in his character, to be both willing

and able thus suddenly and completely to change his mode of life, and to conform to all the restraints and disagreeable circumstances of his new situation."

EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM MR PERCY TO ERASMUS PERCY.

"* * * * * * * * * * Let me take the opportunity of your playful allusion to your present patrons, a porter and an hypochondriac, seriously to explain to you my principles about patronage—I never had any idea that you ought not to be assisted by friends: friends which have been made for you by your parents I consider as part of your patrimony. I inherited many from my father, for which I respect and bless his name. During the course of my life, I have had the happiness of gaining the regard of some persons of talents and virtue, some of them in high station; this regard will extend to my children while I live, and descend to them when I am no more. I never *cultivated* them with a view to advancing my family, but I make no doubt that their friendship will assist my sons in their progress through their several professions. I hold it to be just and right that friends should give, and that young men should gratefully accept, all the means and opportunities of bringing professional acquirements and abilities into notice. Afterwards, the merit of the candidate, and his fitness for any given situation, ought, and probably will, ultimately decide whether the assistance has been properly or improperly given. If family friends procure for any young man a reward of any kind which he has not merited, I should object to that as much as if the place or the reward had been bestowed by a professed patron from political or other interested motives. If my friends were to assist you *merely* because you were my sons, bore my name, or represented the Percy

estate, I should not think this just or honourable; but they know the principles which have been instilled into you, and the education you have received: from these they can form a judgment of what you are likely to be, and for what situations you are qualified; therefore it is but reasonable that they should recommend you preferably to strangers, even of equal ability. Every young man has friends, and they will do all they can to assist him: if they do so according to his merits, they do well; if in spite of his demerits, they do ill; but whilst nothing is practised to prevent the course of free competition, there can be no evil to the community, and there is no injurious patronage. So much for family friends. Now as to friends of your own making, they are as much your own earning, and all the advantage they can be of to you is as honourably yours, as your fees. Whatever assistance you receive from Mr Gresham I consider in this light. As to gratitude—I acknowledge that in some cases gratitude might be guilty of partial patronage.

"If you had saved a minister of state from breaking his neck, and he in return had made you surgeon-general to our armies, without knowing whether you were qualified for that situation, I should call that partial and pernicious patronage; but if you had cured a great man of a dangerous disease, and he afterwards exerted himself to recommend you as a physician to his friends and acquaintance, this I should consider as part of your fit reward.

"So now, my dear son, I hope you fully understand me, and that you will not attribute to me false delicacies, and a prudery, a puritanism of independence, which I utterly disclaim.—Go on, and prosper, and depend upon the warm sympathy and entire approbation of your affectionate father,

"L. Percy."

LETTER FROM ALFRED PERCY TO ROSAMOND.

"My dear Rosamond,

"Thank you for your letters from Hungerford Castle. If Mr Barclay had been but ten years younger, and if he had been ten degrees more a laughing philosopher, and if Caroline could but have loved him, I should have had no objection to him for a brother-in-law; but as my three *ifs* could not be, I regret the Leicestershire estate as little as possible, and I will console myself for not having the marriage settlements to draw.

"Your letters were great delights to me. I kept them to read when the business of the day was done, and I read them by my single candle in my lone chamber. I would rather live in my lone chamber all my days, and never see a wax-light all my nights, than be married to your Lady Angelica Headingham. I give Mr Barclay joy of having escaped from her charms. I prefer an indenture tripartite, however musty or tiresome, to a triple tyrant, however fair or entertaining.

"So you expect me to be very entertaining next vacation, and you expect to hear all I have seen, heard, felt, and understood since I came to London. Alas! Rosamond, I have no wonders to relate; and lest you should be disappointed when we meet, I had best tell you now and at once all I have to say about myself. My history is much like that of the first years at the bar of every young lawyer—short and bitter—much law and few fees. Some, however, I have received.

"A few of my father's friends, who are so unfortunate as to be at law, have been so good as to direct their attorneys to give me briefs. But most of his friends, to my loss—I am too generous, observe, to

say *to my sorrow*—are wise enough to keep clear of lawsuits. I heard his friend, the late chancellor, say the other day to some one who wanted to plunge into a suit in Chancery, 'If anybody were to take a fancy to a corner of my estate, I would rather—provided always that nobody knew it—let him have it than go to law for it.'

"But to go on with my own affairs.

"A little while after my interview with Lord Oldborough, his lordship, to my surprise—for I thought his offer to assist me in my profession, if ever it should lie in his line, was a mere courtier's promise—sent his attorney to me, with a brief in a cause of Colonel Hauton's. The colonel has gone to law (most ungrateful as he is) with his uncle, who was his guardian, and who managed all his affairs for years. I need not explain to you the merits of the suit, or the demerits of the plaintiff. It is enough to tell you that I was all-glorious, with the hope of *making a good point* which had escaped the other counsel employed on our side; but the senior counsel never acknowledged the assistance he had received from me—obtained a nonsuit against the colonel, and had all the honour and triumph of the day. Some few gentlemen of the bar knew the truth, and they were indignant. I hear that my senior, whose name I will never tell you lest you should hate it, has got into great practice by the gaining of this suit. Be that as it may, I would not change places and feelings with him at this moment.

'Grant me an honest fame, or grant me none!'

"Mr Grose, Lord Oldborough's solicitor, a rich rogue and very saucy, was obliged to employ me, because his client ordered it, and Lord Oldborough is not a man to be disobeyed, either in private or public affairs: but the attorney was obviously vexed

and scandalised by his lordship's employing me, a young barrister, of whom nobody had ever heard, and who was not recommended by him, or under the protection even of any solicitor of eminence. Mr Grose knew well how the suit was gained, but he never mentioned it to Lord Oldborough; on the contrary, he gave all the credit to my *senior*. This dry story of a *point* at law is the most interesting thing I have to tell you about myself. I have seen nothing, heard nothing, know nothing, but of law, and I begin to feel it difficult to write, speak, or think, in any but professional language. Tell my father, that I shall soon come to talking law Latin and law French.

"I know no more of what is going on in this great metropolis than if I were at Tobolski. Buckhurst Falconer used to be my newspaper, but since he has given up all hopes of Caroline, he seldom comes near me. I have lost in him my fashionable Daily Advertizer, my Belle Assemblée, and tête-à-tête magazine.

"Last Sunday I went to his fashionable chapel to hear him preach: he is much admired, but I don't like his manner or his sermons—too theatrical and affected—too rhetorical and antithetical, evidently more suited to display the talents of the preacher than to do honour to God or good to man. He told me, that if he could preach himself into a deanery, he should think he had preached to some purpose; and could die with a safe conscience, as he should think he had not laboured in vain in his vocation. Of all men, I think a dissipated clergyman is the most contemptible. How much commissioner Falconer has to answer for, who forced him, or who lured him, knowing how unfit he was for it, into the Church! The commissioner frets because the price of iniquity has not yet been received—the living of Chipping-Friars is not yet Buckhurst's. The poor paralytic incumbent, for whose

death he is praying daily, is still living; and, as Buckhurst says, may shake on many a long year. How Buckhurst lives in the meantime at the rate he does I cannot tell you—that art of living in style upon nothing is an art which I see practised by numbers, but which is still a mystery to me. However, the Falconers seem in great favour at present; the commissioner hopes Lord Oldborough may do something for Buckhurst. Last Sunday, when I went to hear him preach, I saw the whole family of the Falconers, in grandeur, in the Duke of Greenwich's seat. The Marchioness of Twickenham was there, and looked beautiful, but, as I thought, unhappy. After the sermon, I heard Lady Somebody, who was in the next seat to me, whisper to a Lady Otherbody, just as she was rising after the blessing, 'My dear madam, did you hear the shocking report about the Marchioness of Twickenham?' then a very close and confidential whisper; then, loud enough for me to hear, 'But, I do suppose, as there are hopes of an heir, all will be hushed—for the present.'

"Just then the Duke of Greenwich and the marquis and marchioness came down the aisle, and as they passed, my scandal-mongers smiled, and curtsied, and were so delighted to see their dear marchioness! The Miss Falconers, following in the wake of nobility, seemed too much charmed with themselves, to see or know me—till Lord Oldborough, though listening to the duke, espied me, and did me the honour to bow; then the misses put up their glasses to see who I could be, and they also smiled, and curtsied, and were delighted to see me.

"It is well for us that we don't live on their smiles and curtsies. They went off in the Marchioness of Twickenham's superb equipage. I had a full view of her as she drew up the glass, and a more melancholy

countenance than hers I have seldom seen. Lord Oldborough hoped my father was well—but never mentioned Godfrey. The marchioness does not know me, but she turned at the name of Percy, and I thought sighed. Now, Rosamond, I put that sigh in for you —make what you can of it, and of the half-heard mysterious whisper. I expect that you will have a romance in great forwardness, before Monday, the 3rd of next month, when I hope to see you all.

"No letters from Godfrey.—Erasmus has been so busy of late, he tells me, he has not had time to record for you all his doings. In one word, he is doing exceedingly well. His practice increases every day in the city in spite of Dr Frumpton. Adieu till Monday, the 3rd—Happy Monday!—'Restraint that sweetens liberty.' My dear Rosamond, which do you think loves vacation-time most, a lawyer or a schoolboy?

"I was interrupted just now by a letter from a certain farmer of the name of Grimwood, who has written to me, 'because I am a friend to justice, and my father's son,' &c., and has given me a long account of a quarrel he has with Dr Leicester about the tithe of peaches—said Grimwood is so angry, that he can neither spell nor write intelligibly, and he swears that if it cost him a thousand guineas in gold, he will have the law of the doctor. I wish my father would be so kind as to send to Mr Grimwood (he lives at Peggington), and advise him to keep clear of attorney Sharpe, and to keep cool, if possible, till Monday the 3rd, and then I will make up the quarrel if I can. Observe, more is to be done on Monday, the 3rd, than ever was done on any other Monday.

"Your affectionate brother,

"Alfred Percy.

"P.S.—I open my letter to tell you a delightful

piece of news—that Lord Oldborough has taken Temple for his private secretary, and will bring him in for the borough of ——. How his lordship found him out to be the author of that famous pamphlet, which bore Cunningham's name, I do not know. I know that I kept the secret, as in honour bound; but Lord Oldborough has the best ways and means of obtaining intelligence of any man in England. It is singular that he never said one word about the pamphlet to Temple, nor ever appeared to him to know that it was his writing. I cannot understand this."

To comprehend why Lord Oldborough had never mentioned the pamphlet to Mr Temple, it was necessary to know more than Alfred had opportunities of discovering of this minister's character. His lordship did not choose to acknowledge to the world that he had been duped by Cunningham Falconer. Lord Oldborough would sooner repair an error than acknowledge it. Not that he was uncandid; but he considered candour as dangerous and impolitic in a public character.

Upon some occasion, soon after Mr Temple came to be his lordship's secretary, Mr Temple acknowledged to a gentleman, in Lord Oldborough's presence, some trifling official mistake he had made: Lord Oldborough, as soon as the gentleman was gone, said to his secretary, "Sir, if you make a mistake, repair it —that is sufficient. Sir, you are young in political life—you don't know, I see, that candour hurts a political character in the opinion of fools—that is, of the greater part of mankind. Candour may be advantageous to a moral writer, or to a private gentleman, but not to a minister of state. A statesman, if he would govern public opinion, must establish a belief in his infallibility."

Upon this principle Lord Oldborough abided, not only by his own measures, but by his own instruments —right or wrong, he was known to support those whom he had once employed or patronised. Lucky this for the Falconer family!

LETTER FROM ALFRED TO ERASMUS.

"My dear Doctor,

"How I pity you who have no vacations. Please, when next you sum up the advantages and disadvantages of the professions of law and medicine, to set down *vacations* to the credit side of the law. You who work for life and death can have no pause, no respite; whilst I from time to time may, happily, leave all the property, real and personal, of my fellow-creatures, to its lawful or unlawful owners. Now, for six good weeks to come, I may hang sorrow and cast away care, and forget the sound and smell of parchments, and the din of the courts.

"Here I am, a happy prisoner at large, in this nutshell of a house at the Hills, which you have never seen since it has become the family mansion. I am now in the actual tenure and occupation of the little room, commonly called Rosamond's room, bounded on the N., E., W., and S., by blank————[N.B.—A very dangerous practice of leaving blanks for your boundaries in your leases, as an eminent attorney told me last week.] Said room containing in the whole 14 square feet $4\frac{1}{2}$ square inches, superficial measure, be the same more or less. I don't know how my father and mother, and sisters, who all their lives were used to range in spacious apartments, can live so happily, cooped up as they now are: but their bodies, as well as minds, seem to have a contractile power, which adapts them to their present confined circumstances. Pro-

crustes, though he was a mighty tyrant, could fit only the body to the bed. I found all at home as cheerful and contented as in the days when we lived magnificently at Percy Hall. I have not seen the Hungerfords yet; Colonel H. is, I hear, attached to Lady Elizabeth Pembroke. I know very little of her, but Caroline assures me she is an amiable, sensible woman, well suited to him, and to all his family. I need not, however, expatiate on this subject, for Caroline says that she wrote you a long letter, the day after she returned from Hungerford Castle.

"I must tell you what has happened to me since I came to the country. Do you remember my receiving a very angry, very ill-spelled letter, from a certain farmer Grimwood of Pegginton, who swore, that if it cost him a thousand guineas in gold he would have the law of *the doctor*—viz., Dr Leicester—about a tithe of peaches? My father, at my request, was so good as to send for said Grimwood, and to prevent him from having recourse in his ire to attorney Sharpe. With prodigious difficulty, the angry farmer was restrained till my arrival; when I came home, I found him waiting for me, and literally foaming at the mouth with the furious desire for law. I flatter myself, I did listen to his story with a patience for which Job might have been admired. I was well aware that till he had exhausted himself, and was practically convinced that he had nothing more to say, he would be incapable of listening to me, or to the voice of the angel of peace. When at last absolute fatigue of reiteration had reduced him to silence, when he had held me by the button till he was persuaded he had made me fully master of his case, I prevailed upon him to let me hear what could be said on the opposite side of the question; and after some hours' cross-examination of six witnesses, repeaters, and reporters, and after an infinite confusion of *said I's*,

and said he's, it was made clearly to appear that the whole quarrel originated in the mistake of a few words in a message which Dr Leicester's agent had given to his son, a boy of seven years old, who had left it with a deaf gatekeeper of seventy-six, who repeated it to farmer Grimwood, at a moment when the farmer was overheated and overtired, and consequently prone to *misunderstanding* and to anger. The most curious circumstance in the whole business is that the word peaches had never been mentioned by Dr Leicester's agent in the original message; and Dr Leicester really did not know that Mr Grimwood of Pegginton was possessed of a single peach. Grimwood, though uncommonly obstinate and slow, is a just man; and when I at last brought the facts with indisputable evidence home to his understanding, he acknowledged that he had been too hasty, rejoiced that he had not gone to law, begged the doctor and the doctor's agent's pardon, thanked me with his whole honest heart, and went home in perfect charity with all mankind. Mr Sharpe, who soon heard of the amicable conclusion of this affair, laughs at me, and pronounces that I shall never make a lawyer, and that my friends need never flatter themselves with the notion of my rising at the bar.

"Yours truly,

"A. Percy.

"My letter was forgotten yesterday, and I am glad of it. Blessings on farmer Grimwood of Pegginton! Little did I think that he and his quarrel about tithe peaches would have such happy influence on my destiny. Blessings on farmer Grimwood of Pegginton! I repeat: he has been the cause of my seeing such a——of my receiving such a look of approbation—such a smile! She is niece to our good rector—come to spend a few days with him. Grimwood went to the vicarage to

make up his quarrel with Dr Leicester—I do not know what he said of me, but I find it has left a very favourable impression in the good doctor's mind. He came here yesterday, and brought with him his charming niece. My dear Erasmus, you know that I have often prayed that I might never fall in love *seriously*, till I had some reasonable prospect of being able to marry; but I begin to retract my prayer for indifference, and to be of opinion that the most prudent thing a professional man can do is to fall in love—to fall in love with such a woman as Sophia Leicester. What a new motive for exertion! Animated by delightful hope, perseverance, even in the most stupid drudgery, will be pleasure. Hope!—but I am far from hope—far at this instant from knowing distinctly what I hope—or wish—or mean. I will write again soon and explain."

Chapter xx.

IN several successive letters of Alfred to his brother, the progress of his attachment to Miss Leicester is described. Instead of paying a visit of a few days to her uncle, it appears that she stayed at the vicarage during the whole of Alfred's vacation. Her mother died, and, contrary to the expectation of some of her admirers, Miss Leicester was left in possession of only a moderate fortune. She showed much dignity under these adverse circumstances, with a charming mixture of spirit and gentleness of disposition. The change in her expectations, which deprived her of some of her fashionable admirers, showed her the superior sincerity and steadiness of Alfred's sentiments. No promises were given on either side; but it appears, that Alfred was permitted to live and labour upon

hope. He returned to London more eager than ever to pursue his profession.

We trust that our readers will be fully satisfied with this abridgment of the affair, and will be more inclined to sympathize with Alfred, and to wish well to his attachment, than if they had been fatigued with a volume of his love-letters, and with those endless repetitions of the same sentiments with which most lovers' letters abound.

Let us now go on to the affairs of Erasmus Percy.

Mr Panton, provoked by his daughter's coldness towards Lord Roadster, had begun shrewdly to suspect that the lady must be in love with some other person. His young physician was the only man on whom he could fix his suspicions. Constance seemed to be on a more confidential footing with him than with any of the visitors who frequented his house; she had spoken of him in terms of high approbation, and had not contradicted her father when he had, purposely to try her, pronounced Dr Percy to be the handsomest young fellow he knew. While these suspicions were secretly gaining strength in the father's mind, a circumstance occurred which confirmed them at once, and caused them to burst forth with uncontrolled violence of expression.

Dr Percy was called in to prescribe for a sick lawyer, and from this lawyer's conversation he learnt that Lord Runnymede was a ruined man, and that his son Lord Roadster's extravagance had been the cause of his ruin. Erasmus determined to put Mr Panton upon his guard, and thus, if possible, to prevent the amiable Constance from becoming a victim to her father's absurd ambition. With this view he went to Mr Panton's. The old gentleman was gone to dine with his club. Mrs Panton, in her elegant language, desired he would leave his business with her. When

he had explained the purport of his visit, after a variety of vulgar exclamations denoting surprise and horror, and after paying many compliments to her own sagacity, all which appeared incompatible with her astonishment, Mrs Panton expressed much gratitude to Erasmus, mixed with suppressed satisfaction, and significant nods which he could not quite comprehend. Her gratitude was interrupted, and the whole train of her ideas changed, by the entrance of a milliner with new caps and artificial flowers. She, however, retained sufficient recollection of what had passed to call after Erasmus when he had taken his leave, and to insist upon his coming to her party that evening. This he declined. Then she said he *must* dine with her next day, for let him be never so busy, he must dine somewhere, and as good dine with somebody as with nobody—in short, she would take no denial. The next day Erasmus was received with ungracious oddity of manner by old Panton—the only person in the drawing-room when he arrived. Erasmus was so much struck with the gloom of his countenance, that he asked whether Mr Panton felt himself ill. Panton bared his wrist, and held out his hand to Erasmus to feel his pulse—then withdrawing his hand, he exclaimed, "Nonsense! I'm as well as any man in England. Pray, now, Doctor Percy, why don't you get a wig?"—"Why should I, sir, when I have hair?" said Erasmus, laughing.—"Pshaw! doctor, what signifies laughing when I am serious!—Why, sir, in my youth every decent physician wore a wig, and I have no notion of a good physician without a wig—particularly a young one. Sir, many people have a great objection to a young physician for many reasons. And take my advice in time, Doctor Percy —a wig, a proper wig, not one of your modern natural scratches, but a decent powdered doctor's bob, would

make you look ten years older at one slap, and trust me, you'd get into practice fast enough then, and be sent for by many a sober family, that would never think of letting you within their doors without the wig; for, sir, you are too young and too handsome for a physician—Hey! what say you to the wig?" concluded Panton, in a tone of such serious, yet comical impatience, that Erasmus found it difficult to restrain a smile, whilst he answered that he really did not think his charms were so dangerous that it was necessary to disguise them by a wig; that as to his youth, it was an objection which every day would tend to lessen; and that he trusted he might obtain the credit of being a good physician, if he could cure people of their diseases: and they would feel it to be a matter of indifference whether they were restored to health by a doctor in a wig or without one.

"Indifference!" cried Panton, starting upright in his chair with passion. "I don't know what you call a matter of indifference, sir; I can tell you it's no matter of indifference to me—If you mean me; for say that with God's mercy you carried me through, what, then, if you are doing your best to break my heart after all——"

Mr Panton stopped short, for at this instant Constance came into the room, and her father's look of angry suspicion, and her blush, immediately explained to Erasmus what had the moment before appeared to him unintelligible. He felt provoked with himself for colouring in his turn, and being embarrassed without any reason, but he recovered his presence of mind directly, when Constance, with a dignified ingenuous modesty of manner, advanced towards him, notwithstanding her father's forbidding look, and with a sweet, yet firm voice, thanked him for his yesterday's friendly visit to her mother.

"I wonder you a'n't ashamed of yourself, girl!" cried old Panton, choking with passion.

"And I'm sure I wonder you a'n't ashamed of yourself, Mr Panton, if you come to that," cried Mrs Panton, "exposing of your family affairs this way by your unseasonable passions, when one has asked people to dinner too."

"Dinner or no dinner," cried old Panton, and he must have been strangely transported beyond himself when he made that exclamation, "dinner or no dinner, Mrs Panton, I will speak my mind, and be master in my own house! So, Doctor Percy, if you please, we'll leave the ladies, and talk over our matters our own way, in my own room here within."

Dr Percy willingly acceded to this proposal. Old Panton waddled as fast as he could to show the way through the antechamber, whilst Mrs Panton called after him, "Don't expose yourself no more than you can help, my dear!" And as Erasmus passed her, she whispered, "Never mind him, doctor—stand by yourself—I'll stand by you, and *we*'ll stand by you—won't we, Constance?—see her colour!"—"We have reason to be grateful to Dr Percy," said Constance gravely, with an air of offended modesty; "and I hope," added she, with softened sweetness of tone, as she looked at him, and saw his feelings in his countenance, "I hope Doctor Percy is assured of my gratitude, and of my perfect esteem."

"Come! what the devil?" cried old Panton, "I thought you were close behind me."

"Now, doctor," cried he, as soon as he had fairly got Erasmus into his closet, and shut the door, "now, doctor, I suppose you see I am not a man to be imposed upon?"

"Nor, if you were, am I a man to impose upon you, sir," said Erasmus. "If I understand you rightly,

Mr Panton, you suspect me of some designs upon your daughter? I have none."

"And you won't have the assurance to deny that you are in love with her?"

"I am not in love with Miss Panton, sir: she has charms and virtues which might create the strongest attachment in the heart of any man of feeling and discernment who could permit himself to think of her; but I am not in a situation in which I could, with honour, seek to win her affections, and, fortunately for me, this reflection has probably preserved my heart from danger. If I felt anything like love for your daughter, sir, you may be assured that I should not, at this instant, be in your house."

"A mighty fine speech, sir! and well delivered, for aught I know. You are a scholar, and can speak sentences; but that won't impose on me, a plain man that has eyes. Why—tell me!—didn't I see you within these two minutes blushing up to the eyes, both of you, at one another? Don't I know when I see men and women in love—tell me! Mrs Panton—fudge!—And did not I see behind my back, just now, the women conjuring with you?—And aren't you colouring over head and ears with conscience this very instant?—Tell me!"

Erasmus in vain asserted his own and the young lady's innocence, and maintained that blushing was no proof of guilt—he even adverted to the possibility of a man's blushing for others instead of himself.

"Blush for me as much as you please, if it's me you allude to," cried the coarse father; "but when my daughter's at stake, I make no bones of speaking plain, and cutting the matter short in the beginning—for we all know what love is when it comes to a head. Marrow-bones! don't I know that there must be some reason why that headstrong girl won't think of my Lord

Runnymede's son and heir, and such a looking youth, title and all, as my Lord Roadster! And you are the cause, sir; and I thank you for opening my eyes to it, as you did by your information to Mrs Panton yesterday, in my absence."

Erasmus protested, with such an air of truth as would have convinced any person capable of being convinced, that, in giving that information, he had been actuated solely by a desire to save Miss Panton from a ruinous match, by honest regard for her and all her family.

"Ruinous!—You are wrong, sir—I know better—I know best—I saw my Lord Runnymede himself this very morning—a little temporary want of cash only from the estate's being tied up, as they sometimes tie estates, which all noble families is subject to—Tell me! don't I know the bottom of these things? for though I haven't been used to land, I know all about it. And at worst, my Lord Roadster, my son-in-law that is to be, is not chargeable with a penny of his father's debts. So your informer is wrong, sir, every way, and no lawyer, sir, for I have an attorney at my back—and your information's all wrong, and you had no need to interfere."

Erasmus felt and acknowledged the imprudence of his interference, but hoped it might be forgiven in favour of the motive—and he looked so honestly glad to hear that his information was all wrong, that old Panton at the moment believed in his integrity, and said, stretching out his hand towards him, "Well, well, no harm done—then it's all as it should be, and we may ring for dinner——But," recurring again to his favourite idea, "you'll get the wig, doctor?"

"Excuse me," said Erasmus, laughing, "your confidence in me cannot depend upon a wig."

"It can, sir, and it does," cried Panton, turning

again, with all his anger revived. "Excuse you! No, sir, I won't; for the wig's my test, and I told Mrs Panton so last night—the wig's my test of your uprightness in this matter, sir; and I fairly tell you, that if you refuse this, all the words you can string don't signify a button with me."

"And by what right, sir, do you speak to me in this manner?" cried Erasmus proudly, for he lost all sense of the ludicrous in indignation at the insolent doubt of his integrity, which, after all the assurances he had given, these last words from Mr Panton implied: "By what right, sir, do you speak to me in this manner?—And what reason can you have to expect that I should submit to any tests to convince you of the truth of my assertions?"

"Right! Reason!" cried Panton. "Why, doctor, don't you know that I'm your patron?"

"My patron!" repeated Erasmus, in a tone which would have expressed much to the mind of any man of sense or feeling, but which conveyed no idea to the gross apprehension of old Panton except that Dr Percy was ignorant of the fact.

"Your patron—yes, doctor—why, don't you know that ever since you set me upon my legs I have been going up and down the city puffing—that is, I mean, recommending you to all my friends? and you see you're of consequence—getting into fine practice for so young a man. And it stands to reason that when one takes a young man by the hand, one has a right to expect one's advice should be followed; and as to the wig, I don't make it a test—you've an objection to a test—but, as I've mentioned it to Mrs Panton, I must make it a point, and you know I'm not a man to go back. And you'll consider that if you disoblige me, you can't expect that I should continue my friendship, and protection, and patronage, and all that."

"Be assured, sir, I expect nothing from you," said Erasmus, "and desire nothing: I have the happiness and honour to belong to a profession, in which, if a man merits confidence, he will succeed, without requiring any man's patronage."——Much less the patronage of such a one as you! Erasmus would have said, but that he commanded his indignation, or, perhaps, it was extinguished by contempt.

A servant now came to announce that the company was arrived and dinner was waiting. In very bad humour Mr Panton, nevertheless, ate an excellent dinner, growling over everything as he devoured it. Constance seemed much grieved by her father's unseasonable fit of rudeness and obstinacy; with sweetness of temper and filial duty she bore with his humour, and concealed it as far as she could from observation. Mrs Panton was displeased with this, and once went so far as to whisper to Erasmus that her step-daughter wanted spirit sadly, but that he ought never to mind that, but to take a broad hint, and keep his ground. Erasmus, who with great simplicity, and an upright character, had quick observation and tact, perceived pretty nearly what was going on in the family. He saw that the stepmother, under an air of frank and coarse good-nature, was cunning and interested; that she wished to encourage the daughter to open war with the father, knowing that nothing could incense him so much as Constance's thinking of a poor physician instead of accepting of an earl's son; Mrs Panton wished then to fan to a flame the spark which she was confident existed in his daughter's heart. Erasmus, who was not apt to fancy that ladies liked him, endeavoured to relieve Constance from the agonizing apprehension which he saw she felt of his being misled by her mother's hints: he appeared sometimes not to hear, and at other times

not to understand, what Mrs Panton whispered; and at last talked so loud across the table to Mr Henry, about letters from Godfrey, and the officers of all the regiments in or out of England, that no other subject could be introduced, and no other voice could be heard. As soon as he decently could, after dinner, Dr Percy took his leave, heartily glad to escape from his awkward situation, and from the patronage of Mr Panton. Erasmus was mistaken, however, in supposing that Mr Panton could do him no harm. It is true that he could not deny that Dr Percy had restored him to health, and the opinion, which had spread in the city, of Dr Percy's skill, was not, and could not be diminished by Mr Panton's railing against him; but when he hinted that the young physician had practised upon his daughter's heart, all the rich citizens who had daughters to watch began to consider him as a dangerous person, and resolved never to call him in, except in some desperate case. Mrs Panton's gossiping confidences did more harm than her husband's loud complaints; and the very eagerness which poor Constance showed to vindicate Dr Percy, and to declare the truth, served only to confirm the sagaciously nodding mothers and over-wise fathers in their own opinions. Mr Henry said and did what he could for Erasmus; but what could be done by a young man shut up all day in a counting-house? or who would listen to anything that was said by a youth without station or name? Mr Gresham unluckily was at this time at his country-seat. Poor Erasmus found his practice in the city decline as rapidly as it had risen, and he began a little to doubt the truth of that noble sentiment which he had so proudly expressed. He was comforted, however, by letters from his father, who strongly approved his conduct, and who maintained that truth would at last prevail, and that the

prejudice which had been raised against him would, in time, be turned to his advantage.

It happened that, while old Panton, in his present ludicrous fit of obstinacy, was caballing against our young physician with all his might in the city, the remote consequences of his absurdities were operating in Dr Percy's favour at the west end of the town. Our readers may recollect having heard of a footman, whom Mr Panton turned away for laughing at his perversity. Erasmus had at the time pleaded in the poor fellow's favour, and had afterwards, when the servant was out of place, in distress, and ill, humanely attended him, and cured a child of his, who had inflamed eyes. This man was now in the service of a rich and very fine lady, who lived in Grosvenor Square —Lady Spilsbury. Her ladyship had several sickly children—children rendered sickly by their mother's overweening and injudicious care. Alarmed successively by every fashionable medical terror of the day, she dosed her children with every specific which was publicly advertised or privately recommended. No creatures of their age had taken such quantities of Ching's lozenges, Godbold's elixir, or Dixon's antibilious pills. The consequence was, that the dangers, which had at first been imaginary, became real: these little victims of domestic medicine never had a day's health: they looked, and were, more dead than alive. Still the mother, in the midst of hourly alarms, was in admiration of her own medical skill, which she said had actually preserved, in spite of nature, children of such sickly constitutions. In consequence of this conviction, she redoubled her vigilance, and the most trivial accident was magnified into a symptom of the greatest importance.

It happened on the day when the eldest Miss Spilsbury had miraculously attained her seventh year, a

slight inflammation was discerned in her right eye, which was attributed by her mother to her having neglected the preceding day to bathe it in elder-flower water; by her governess, to her having sat up the preceding night to supper; by her maid, to her having been found peeping through a windy key-hole; and by the young lady herself, to her having been kept poring for two hours over her French lesson.

Whatever might have been the original cause, the inflammation evidently increased, either in consequence or in spite of the innumerable remedies applied internally and externally—the eye grew redder and redder, and as red as blood, the nose inflamed, and the mother, in great alarm for the beauty as well as health of her child, sent for Sir Amyas Courtney. He had already won Lady Spilsbury's heart by recommending to her the *honan tcha*, or Tartar tea, which enables the Tartars to digest raw flesh, and tinges water of a red colour.

Sir Amyas pronounced that the young lady had hereditary nerves, besought Lady Spilsbury to compose herself, assured her the inflammation was purely symptomatic, and as soon as he could subdue the continual nervous inclination to shrivel up the nose, which he trusted he could in time master, all would go well. But Sir Amyas attended every day for a month, yet never got the mastery of this nervous inclination. Lady Spilsbury then was persuaded *it could not be nerves, it must be scrofula;* and she called in Dr Frumpton, *the man for scrofula.* He of course confirmed her ladyship in her opinion; for a week d——d nerves and Sir Amyas; threw in desperate doses of calomel for another month, reduced the poor child to what the maid called an *attomy*, and still the inflammation increased. Lady Spilsbury desired a consultation of physicians, but Dr Frumpton would

not consult with Sir Amyas, nor would Sir Amyas consult with Dr Frumpton. Lady Spilsbury began to dread that the sight of the eye would be injured, and this idea terrified the mother almost out of her senses. In the suspension of authority which terror produces in a family, the lady's maid usually usurps considerable power.

Now her ladyship's maid had been offended by Dr Frumpton's calling her *my good girl*, and by Sir Amyas Courtney's having objected to a green silk bandage which she had recommended; so that she could not *abide* either of the gentlemen, and she was confident the young lady would never get well while they had the management of affairs: she had heard —but she did not mention from whom, she was too diplomatic to give up her authority—she had heard of a young physician, a Dr Percy, who had performed wonderful great cures in the city, and had in particular cured a young *lady* who had an inflamed eye, just for all the world like Miss Spilsbury's. In this last assertion there was, perhaps, some little exaggeration; but it produced a salutary effect upon Lady Spilsbury's imagination: the footman was immediately despatched for Dr Percy, and ordered to make all possible haste. Thus, by one of those petty underplots of life, which often, unknown to us, are continually going on, our young physician was brought into a situation where he had an opportunity of showing his abilities. These favourable accidents happen to many men who are not able to make use of them, and thus the general complaint is preferred of want of good fortune, or of opportunity for talents to distinguish themselves.

Upon Dr Percy's arrival at Lady Spilsbury's, he immediately perceived that parties ran high, and that the partizans were all eager to know whether he

would pronounce the young lady's case to be nervous or scrofulous. He was assailed by a multitude of female voices, and requested particularly to attend to innumerable contradictory symptoms, before he was permitted even to see his patient. He attended carefully to whatever facts he could obtain, pure from opinion and misrepresentation. The young lady was in a darkened room—he begged to have a little more light admitted, though she was in such pain that she could scarcely endure it. Our young physician had the great advantage of possessing the use of his senses and understanding, unbiassed by medical theories, or by the authority of great names: he was not always trying to force symptoms to agree with previous descriptions, but he was actually able to see, hear, and judge of them as they really appeared. There was a small protuberance on the left side of the nose, which, on his pressing it, gave great pain to the child.

"Dear me! miss, you know," said the maid, "it is not in your nose you feel the great pain—you know you told Sir Amyas Courtney t'other day—that is, Sir Amyas Courtney told you——"

Dr Percy insisted that the child should be permitted to speak for herself; and, relieved from the apprehension of not saying the thing that she was expected to say, she described her present and past feelings. She said, "that the pain seemed lately to have *changed from where it was before*—that it had changed ever since Dr Frumpton's opening his snuff-box near her had made her sneeze." This sneeze was thought by all but Dr Percy to be a circumstance too trivial to be worth mentioning; but on this hint he determined to repeat the experiment. He had often thought that many of the pains which are supposed to be symptoms of certain diseases, many

disorders which baffle the skill of medicine, originate in accidents, by which extraneous substances are taken or forced into different parts of the body. He ordered some cephalic snuff to be administered to the patient. All present looked with contempt at the physician who proposed such a simple remedy. But soon after the child had sneezed violently and repeatedly, Dr Percy saw a little bit of green silk appear, which was drawn from the nostril, to the patient's great and immediate relief. Her brothers and sisters then recollected having seen her, two months before, stuffing up her nose a bit of green ribbon, which she said she liked because it smelt of some perfume. The cause of the inflammation removed, it soon subsided; the eye and nose recovered their natural size and colour, and everybody said "Who would have thought it?" all but Dr Frumpton and Sir Amyas Courtney, who, in the face of demonstration, maintained each his own opinion; declaring that the green ribbon had nothing to do with the business. The sudden recovery of the child, Sir Amyas said, proved to him in the most satisfactory manner that the disease was, as he at first pronounced—nervous. Dr Frumpton swore that scrofula would soon break out again in another shape; and, denouncing vengeance against generations yet unborn, he left Lady Spilsbury's children to take the consequence of trusting to a youngster, whose impertinent interference he could never forget or forgive. In spite of all that the two angry and unsuccessful physicians could say, the recovery of the child's eye redounded much to Dr Percy's honour, and introduced him to the notice of several men of science and celebrity, who frequented Lady Spilsbury's excellent dinners. Even the intemperance of Dr Frumpton's anger was of service; for in consequence of his furious

assertions, inquiry was made into the circumstances, and the friends of Erasmus had then an opportunity of producing in his defence the Irish porter. His cause could not be in better hands.

With that warmth and eloquence of gratitude characteristic of his country, the poor fellow told his story so as to touch every heart. Among others it particularly affected an officer just returned from our armies on the Continent: and by him it was the next day repeated at the table of a celebrated general, when the conversation turned upon the conduct of certain army surgeons. Lord Oldborough happened to be one of the company; the name of Percy struck his ear; the moment Erasmus was thus brought to his recollection, he attended particularly to what the officer was saying; and, after hearing two circumstances, which were so marked with humanity and good sense, his lordship determined to give what assistance he could to the rising credit of the son of his old friend, by calling him in for Lady Oldborough, who was in a declining state of health. But Sir Amyas Courtney, who had long attended her ladyship, endeavoured, with all the address of hatred, to prejudice her against his young rival, and to prevent her complying with her lord's request. Depending on her habitual belief that he was essential to her existence, Sir Amyas went so far as to declare that if Dr Percy should be sent for, he must discontinue his visits. Lord Oldborough, however, whom the appearance of opposition to his will always confirmed in his purpose, cut short the matter by a few peremptory words.

Sir Amyas, the soft silken Sir Amyas, could not for an instant stand before the terror of Lord Oldborough's eye: the moment he was told that he was at perfect liberty to discontinue his visits, his regard—

his attachment—his devotion for Lady Oldborough, prevented the possibility of abandoning her ladyship; he was willing to sacrifice his private feelings, perhaps his private prejudices, his judgment, in short anything, everything, sooner than disoblige Lord Oldborough, or any of his family. Lord Oldborough, satisfied with the submission, scarcely staid to hear the end of the speech, but rang the bell, ordered that Dr Percy should be sent for, and went to attend a Cabinet council.

Lady Oldborough received him as it might be supposed that a very sickly, very much prejudiced, very proud lady of quality would receive a physician without a name, who was forced upon her in opposition to her long habits of reliance on her courtly favourite. Her present disease, as Dr Percy believed, was water upon her chest, and there was some chance of saving her, by the remedies which have been found successful in a first attack of that complaint; but Sir Amyas had pronounced that her ladyship's disorder was merely nervous spasms, consequent upon a bilious attack, and he could not, or would not, recede from his opinion: his prescriptions, to which her ladyship devoutly adhered to the last, were all directed against bile and nerves. She would not hear of water on the chest, or take any of the remedies proposed by Dr Percy. Lady Oldborough died ten days after he was called in. Those who knew nothing of the matter, that is, above nine-tenths of all who talked about it, affirmed that poor Lady Oldborough's death was occasioned by her following the rash prescriptions of a young physician, who had been forced upon her by Lord Oldborough; and who, unacquainted with her ladyship's constitution, had mistaken the nature of her complaint. All her ladyship's female relations joined in this clamour, for they were most of them friends or partizans of Sir

Amyas Courtney. The rank and conspicuous situation of Lord Oldborough interested vast numbers in the discussion, which was carried on in every fashionable circle the day after her ladyship's decease.

Dr Percy took a decided step in this emergency. He went to the minister, to whom no one, friend or enemy, had ventured to give the slightest hint of the reports in circulation. Dr Percy plainly stated the facts, represented that his character and the fate of his whole life were at stake, and besought his lordship to have the truth examined into by eminent, and impartial physicians. Erasmus was aware of all he hazarded in making this request—aware that he must hurt Lord Oldborough's feelings—that he must irritate him by bringing to his view at once, and in this critical moment, a number of family cabals, of which he was ignorant—aware that Lord Oldborough was oppressed with business, public and private; and that, above all things, he was impatient of any intrusion upon his hours of privacy. But all these subordinate considerations vanished before Lord Oldborough's magnanimity. Without saying one word, he sat down and wrote an order, that proper means should be taken to ascertain the disease of which Lady Oldborough died.

The report made, in consequence of this order, by the surgeons, confirmed Dr Percy's opinion that her ladyship's disease was water on the chest—and Lord Oldborough took effectual means to give the truth publicity.

"You need not thank me, Dr Percy—you have a right to expect justice, more you will never want. My assistance might, it seems, have been injurious, but can never be necessary to your reputation."

These few words—much from Lord Oldborough—and which he took care to say when they could be heard by numbers, were quickly circulated. The

physicians and surgeons who had given in their report were zealous in maintaining the truth; medical and political parties were interested in the affair; the name of Dr Percy was joined with the first names in the medical world, and repeated by the first people in the great world, so that with surprising celerity he became known and fashionable. And thus the very circumstance that threatened his ruin was, by his civil courage and decided judgment, converted into the means of his rising into eminence.

Late one night, after a busy and fatiguing day, just as Erasmus had got into bed, and was settling himself comfortably to sleep, he heard a loud knock at the door.

"Mr Henry, sir, from Mr Panton's in the city, wishes to speak with you."

"Show him in.——So, old Panton, I suppose—some indigestion has brought him to reason?"

"Oh! no such thing," interrupted Mr Henry—"I would not have disturbed you at this time of night for any such trifle; but our excellent friend, Mr Gresham——"

"What of him?" cried Erasmus, starting up in bed.

"Is ill—but whether dangerously or not, I cannot tell you. An express from his house in the country has just arrived; I heard the letter read, but could not get it to bring to you. It was written to old Panton from Mr Gresham's housekeeper, without her master's knowledge, as he has no opinion of physicians, she said, except of a young Dr Percy, and did not like to send for him for such a trifle as a sore throat, lest it should hurt his practice to leave town at this season."

Erasmus staid to hear no more, but ordered horses instantly, set out, and travelled with all possible expedition. He had reason to rejoice that he had not

made a moment's delay. He found Mr Gresham actually suffocating from a quinsy. A surgeon had been sent for from the next town, but was not at home. Erasmus, the instant he saw Mr Gresham, perceiving the danger, without saying one syllable, sprang to the bed, lanced the throat, and saved the life of his valuable friend. The surgeon, who came the next day, said that Dr Percy ought to have waited for his arrival, and that a physician might be severely blamed for performing a surgical operation—that it was a very indelicate thing.

But Mr Gresham, who had fallen into a comfortable sleep, did not hear him; nor did Dr Percy, who was writing the following letter to his father:

* * * * * * * * *

* * * * "You will sympathize with me, my dear father, and all my friends at home will sympathize in the joy I feel at seeing this excellent man, this kind friend, recovering under my care. These are some of the happy moments which, in my profession, repay us for years of toil, disappointment, and sufferings—yes, sufferings—for we must suffer with those that suffer: we must daily and hourly behold every form of pain, acute or lingering; numbers, every year of our lives, we must see perish, the victims of incurable disease. We are doomed to hear the groans of the dying, and the lamentations, sometimes the reproaches, of surviving friends; often and often must the candid and humane physician deplore the insufficiency of his art. But there are successful, gloriously successful moments, which reward us for all the painful duties, all the unavailing regrets of our profession.

"This day I shall recall to my mind whenever my spirits sink or whenever my fortitude begins to fail. I wish you could see the gratitude and joy in the looks of all Mr Gresham's servants. His death would have

been a public loss, for the beneficent use he makes of his princely fortune has rendered numbers dependent on him for the comforts of life. He lives here in a palace, and everything he has done, whether in building or planting, in encouraging the useful or the fine arts, has been done with a judicious and magnificent spirit. Surely this man ought to be happy in his own reflections, and yet he does not seem to me as happy as he deserves to be. I shall stay here till I see him out of all danger of relapse.—He has just awakened—— Adieu for the present."

In continuation of this letter the following was written the next day.

"All danger is over—my friend is convalescent, and I shall return to town to-morrow. But would you think, my dear father, that the real cause of Mr Gresham's being unhappy is patronage? By accident I made use of that word in speaking of old Panton's quarrel with me, and he cursed the word the moment I pronounced it: 'Yes,' he exclaimed, 'it is twice accursed—once in the giving, and once in the receiving.' Then he began, in a most feeling manner, to describe the evils attendant upon being a patron. He has done his utmost to relieve and encourage genius in distress; but among all the poets, painters, artists, and men of letters, whom in various ways he has obliged, he has scarcely been able to satisfy the vanity or the expectations of any. Some have passed from excessive adulation to gross abuse of him—many more torment him continually with their complaints and invectives against each other; and, instead of having done good by his generosity, he finds that, in a variety of instances, of which he detailed the circumstances, he has done much mischief, and, as he says, infinite injury to his own peace of mind—for he has burdened himself with the care of a number of people, who cannot be

made happy. He has to deal with men but partially cultivated; with *talents*, unaccompanied by reason, justice, or liberality of sentiment. With great feeling himself, he suffers acutely from all their jealousies and quarrels, and from the near and perpetual view of the *littleness* by which artists too often degrade themselves. Another man in Mr Gresham's situation would become a misanthropist, and would comfort himself by railing against the ingratitude of mankind; but this would not comfort Mr Gresham. He loves his fellow-creatures, and sees their faults in sorrow rather than in anger. I have known him, and intimately, for a considerable time, and yet I never heard him speak on this subject but once before, when the painter, whom I used to call the irritable genius, had caricatured him in return for all his kindness.

"Though it is not easy to change the habits or to alter the views and objects of a man, like Mr Gresham, past the meridian of life, yet I cannot help flattering myself that this might be effected. If he would, by one bold effort, shake off these dependants, the evening of his days might yet be serene and happy. He wants friends, not *protégées*. I have advised him, as soon as his strength will permit, to take a little tour, which will bring him into your part of the country. He wishes much to become acquainted with all our family, and I have given him a note of introduction. You, my dear father, can say to him more than I could with propriety.

"Mr Gresham knows how to accept as well as to give. He allows me to have the pleasure of proving to him, that where my friends are concerned, I am above pecuniary considerations. My love to my dear mother, Rosamond, and Caroline.

"Your affectionate son,

"E. Percy."

Though Mr Gresham would not hurt the feelings of his young friend and physician, by pressing upon him at the moment any remuneration, or by entering into any calculation of the loss he would sustain by his absence from London at this critical season, he took his own methods of justly recompensing Dr Percy. Erasmus found at his door, some time after his return to town, a plain but excellent chariot and horses, with a note from Mr Gresham, written in such terms as precluded the possibility of refusing the offer.

The celebrated London physician, who said that he was not paid for three weeks' attendance in the country, by a draft of two thousand pounds; and who, when the pen was put into his own hands, wrote four in the place of two, would smile in scorn at the generosity of Mr Gresham and the disinterestedness of Dr Percy.

Chapter xvi.

LETTER FROM CAROLINE TO ERASMUS.

"MY DEAR ERASMUS,—Your friend and patient, Mr Gresham, was so eager to take your advice, and so quick in his movements, that your letter, announcing his intended visit, reached us but a few days before his arrival at the Hills. And—mark how great and little events, which seem to have no possible link of connexion, depend upon one another—Alfred or Mr Gresham must have sat up all night, or slept on the floor, had not Alfred, that morning, received a letter from Mrs Hungerford, summoning him to town to draw her son's marriage settlements. It is thought that Colonel Hungerford, whose leave of absence

from his regiment has, by special favour, been repeatedly protracted, will be very soon sent abroad. Lady Elizabeth Pembroke has, therefore, consented to his urgent desire for their immediate union; and Alfred will, I am sure, give them as little reason as possible to complain of the law's delay. Lady Elizabeth, who has all that decision of mind and true courage which you know is so completely compatible with the most perfect gentleness of disposition, and softness, even timidity of manners, resolves to leave all her relations and friends, and to go abroad. She says she knew what sacrifices she must make in marrying a soldier, and she is prepared to make them without hesitation or repining.

"And now to return to your friend, Mr Gresham. The more we see of him the more we like him. Perhaps he bribed our judgment a little at first by the kind, affectionate manner in which he spoke of you; but, independently of this prepossession, we should, I hope, soon have discovered his merit. He is a good English merchant. Not a '*M. Friport, qui sçait donner, mais qui ne sçait pas vivre,*' but a well-bred, well-informed gentleman, upright, liberal, and benevolent, without singularity or oddities of any sort. His quiet, plain manners, free from ostentation, express so well the kind feelings of his mind, that I prefer them infinitely to what are called polished manners. Last night Rosamond and I were amusing ourselves by contrasting him with our recollection of the polished M. de Tourville—but as you were not at home at the memorable time of the shipwreck, and of M. de Tourville's visit, you cannot feel the force of our parallel between these two beings, the most dissimilar I have ever seen—an English merchant and a diplomatic Frenchman. You will ask, what put it into our heads to make the comparison? A

slight circumstance which happened yesterday evening. Rosamond was showing Mr Gresham some of my drawings, and among them the copy of that beautiful miniature in M. de Tourville's snuff-box. My father told him the history of Euphrosyne, of her German prince, and Count Albert. Mr Gresham's way of listening struck us, by its contrast to the manner of M. de Tourville—and this led us on to draw a parallel between their characters. Mr Gresham, instead of shrugging his shoulders, and smiling disdainfully, like the Frenchman, at the Quixotism of the young nobleman, who lost his favour at Court by opposing the passion of his prince, was touched with Count Albert's disinterested character; and quite forgetting, as Rosamond observed, to compliment me upon my picture of Euphrosyne, he laid down the miniature with a negligence of which M. de Tourville never would have been guilty, and went on eagerly to tell some excellent traits of the count. For instance, when he was a very young man in the Prussian or Austrian service, I forget which, in the heat of an engagement he had his sabre lifted over the head of one of the enemy's officers, when looking down, he saw that the officer's right arm was broken. The count immediately stopped, took hold of the disabled officer's bridle, and led him off to a place of safety. This and many other anecdotes Mr Gresham heard, when he spent some time on the Continent a few years ago, whilst he was transacting some commercial business. He had full opportunities of learning the opinions of different parties; and he says, that it was the prayer of all the good and wise in Germany, whenever the hereditary prince should succeed to the throne, that Count Albert Altenberg might be his minister.

"By-the-bye, Mr Gresham, though he is rather an elderly man, and looks remarkably cool and composed,

shows all the warmth of youth whenever any of his feelings are touched.

"I wish you could see how much my father is pleased with your friend. He has frequently repeated that Mr Gresham, long as he has been trained in the habits of mercantile life, is quite free from the spirit of monopoly in small or great affairs. My father rejoices that his son has made such a friend. Rosamond charged me to leave her room to write to you at the end of my letter; but she is listening so intently to something Mr Gresham is telling her, that I do not believe she will write one line. I hear a few words, which so much excite my curiosity, that I must go and listen too. Adieu.

"Affectionately yours,
"CAROLINE PERCY."

Another letter from Caroline to Erasmus, dated some weeks after the preceding.

Tuesday, 14th.

"Yes, my dear Erasmus, your friend, Mr Gresham, is still with us; and he declares that he has not, for many years, been so happy as since he came here. He is now sufficiently intimate in this family to speak of himself, and of his own feelings and plans. You, who know what a horror he has of egotism, will consider this as a strong proof of his liking us, and of his confidence in our regard. He has related many of the instances, which, I suppose, he told you, of the ingratitude and disappointments he has met with from persons whom he attempted to serve. He has kept us all, for hours, Rosamond especially, in a state of alternate pity and indignation. For all that has happened, he blames himself more than he blames any one else; and with a mildness and candour which make us at

once admire and love him, he adverts to the causes of his own disappointment.

"My father has spoken to him as freely as you could desire. He has urged, that as far as the public good is concerned, free competition is more advantageous to the arts and to artists than any private patronage can be.

"If the productions have real merit, they will make their own way; if they have not merit, they ought not to make their way. And the same argument he has applied to literary merit, and to the merit, generally speaking, of persons as well as of things. He has also plainly told Mr Gresham that he considers the trade of a patron as one of the most thankless, as it is the least useful, of all trades.

"All this has made such an impression upon your candid friend, that he has declared it to be his determination to have no more protégées, and to let the competition of talents work fairly without the interference, or, as he expressed it, any of the *bounties* and *drawbacks* of patronage. 'But then,' he added, with a sigh, 'I am an isolated being: am I to pass the remainder of my days without objects of interest or affection? While Constance Panton was a child, she was an object to me; but now she must live with her parents, or she will marry: at all events, she is rich —and is my wealth to be only for my selfish gratification? How happy you are, Mr Percy, who have such an amiable wife, such a large family, and so many charming domestic objects of affection!'

"Mr Gresham then walked away with my father to the end of the room, and continued his conversation in a low voice, to which I did not think I ought to listen, so I came upstairs to write to you. I think you told me that Mr Gresham had suffered some disappointment early in life, which prevented his marrying; but if I

am not mistaken, his mind now turns again to the hopes of domestic happiness. If I am not mistaken, Rosamond has made an impression on his heart. I have been as conveniently and meritoriously deaf, blind, and stupid, for some time past, as possible; but though I shut my eyes, and stop my ears, yet my imagination will act, and I can only say to myself, as we used to do when we were children—I will not think of it till it comes, that I may have the pleasure of the surprise. * * *

"Affectionately yours,
"Caroline Percy."

Caroline was right—Rosamond had made a great impression upon Mr Gresham's heart. His recollection of the difference between his age and Rosamond's, and his consciousness of the want of the gaiety and attractions of youth, rendered him extremely diffident, and for some time suppressed his passion, at least delayed the declaration of his attachment. But Rosamond seemed evidently to like his company and conversation, and she showed that degree of esteem and interest for him which, he flattered himself, might be improved into a more tender affection. He ventured to make his proposal—he applied first to Mrs Percy, and entreated that she would make known his sentiments to her daughter.

When Mrs Percy spoke to Rosamond, she was surprised at the very decided refusal which Rosamond immediately gave. Both Mrs Percy and Caroline were inclined to think that Rosamond had not only a high opinion of Mr Gresham, but that she had felt a preference for him which she had never before shown for any other person; and they thought that, perhaps, some refinement of delicacy about accepting his large fortune, or some fear that his want of high

birth, and what are called good connexions, would be objected to by her father and mother, might be the cause of this refusal. Mrs Percy felt extremely anxious to explain her own sentiments, and fully to understand Rosamond's feelings. In this anxiety Caroline joined most earnestly; all the kindness, sympathy, and ardent affection, which Rosamond had ever shown for her, when the interests of her heart were in question, were strong in Caroline's recollection, and these were now fully returned. Caroline thought Mr Gresham was too old for her sister; but she considered that this objection, and all others, should yield to Rosamond's own opinion and taste. She agreed with her mother in imagining that Rosamond was not quite indifferent to his merit and to his attachment.

Mrs Percy began by assuring Rosamond that she should be left entirely at liberty to decide according to her own judgment and feelings. "You have seen, my dear, how your father and I have acted towards your sister; and you may be sure that we shall show you equal justice. Though parents are accused of always rating 'a good estate above a faithful lover,' yet you will recollect that Mr Barclay's good estate did not induce us to press his suit with Caroline. Mr Gresham has a large fortune; and, to speak in Lady Jane Granville's style, it must be acknowledged, my dear Rosamond, that this would be a most advantageous match; but for this very reason we are particularly desirous that you should determine for yourself: at the same time, let me tell you, that I am a little surprised by the promptness of your decision. Let me be sure that this negative is serious—let me be sure that I rightly understand you, my love: now, when only your own Caroline is present, tell me what are your objections to Mr Gresham?"

Thanks for her mother's kindness; thanks, repeated, with tears in her eyes, were for a considerable time all the answer that could be obtained from Rosamond. At length she said, "Without having any particular objection to a person, surely, if I cannot love him, that is sufficient reason for my not wishing to marry him."

Rosamond spoke these words in so feeble a tone, and with so much hesitation, colouring at the same time so much that her mother and sister were still uncertain how they were to understand her *if*—and Mrs Percy replied, "Undoubtedly, my dear, *if* you cannot love him; but that is the question. Is it quite certain that you cannot?"

"Oh! quite certain—I believe."

"This certainty seems to have come very suddenly," said her mother, smiling.

"What can you mean, mother?"

"I mean that you did not show any decided dislike to him, till within these few hours, my dear."

"Dislike! I don't feel—I hope I don't show any dislike—I am sure I should be very ungrateful. On the contrary, it would be impossible for anybody, who is good for anything, to *dislike* Mr Gresham."

"Then you can neither like him nor dislike him?—You are in a state of absolute indifference."

"That is, except gratitude—gratitude for all his kindness to Erasmus, and for his partiality to me—gratitude I certainly feel."

"And esteem?"

"Yes; to be sure, esteem."

"And I think," continued her mother, "that before he committed this crime of proposing for you, Rosamond, you used to show some of the indignation of a good friend against those ungrateful people who used him so ill."

"Indignation! Yes," interrupted Rosamond, "who could avoid feeling indignation?"

"And pity?—I think I have heard you express pity for poor Mr Gresham."

"Well, ma'am, because he really was very much to be pitied—don't you think so?"

"I do—and pity——" said Mrs Percy, smiling.

"No, indeed, mother, you need not smile—nor you, Caroline; for the sort of pity which I feel is not—— it was merely pity by itself, plain pity: why should people imagine and insist upon it, that more is felt than expressed?"

"My dear," said Mrs Percy, "I do not insist upon your feeling more than you really do; but let us see—you are in a state of absolute indifference, and yet you feel esteem, indignation, pity—how is this, Rosamond? How can this be?"

"Very easily, ma'am, because by absolute indifference, I mean—Oh! you know very well what I mean—absolute indifference as to——"

"Love, perhaps, is the word which you cannot pronounce this morning."

"Now, mother! Now, Caroline! You fancy that I love him. But, supposing there were any *if* in the case on my side, tell me only *why* I should refuse him?"

"Nay, my dear, that is what we wait to hear from you," said Mrs Percy.

"Then I will tell you why," said Rosamond: "in the first place, Mr Gresham has a large fortune, and I have none. And I have the greatest horror of the idea of marrying for money, or of the possibility of its being suspected that I might do so."

"I thought that was the fear!" cried Caroline: "but, my dear Rosamond, with your generous mind, you know it is quite impossible that you should marry from interested motives."

"Absolutely impossible," said her mother. "And when you are sure of your own mind, it would be weakness, my dear, to dread the suspicions of others, even if such were likely to be formed."

"Oh! do not, my dearest Rosamond," said Caroline, taking her sister's hand, pressing it between hers, and speaking in the most urgent, almost supplicating tone, "do not, generous as you are, sacrifice your happiness to mistaken delicacy!"

"But," said Rosamond, after a moment's silence, "but you attribute more than I deserve to my delicacy and generosity: I ought not to let you think me so much better than I really am. I had some other motives: you will think them very foolish—very ridiculous—perhaps wrong; but you are so kind and indulgent to me, mother, that I will tell you all my follies. I do not like to marry a man who is not a hero—you are very good not to laugh, Caroline."

"Indeed, I am too seriously interested at present to laugh," said Caroline.

"And you must be sensible," continued Rosamond, "that I could not, by any effort of imagination, or by any illusion of love, convert a man of Mr Gresham's time of life and appearance, with his wig, and sober kind of understanding, into a hero."

"As to the wig," replied Mrs Percy, "you will recollect that both Sir Charles Grandison and Lovelace wore wigs; but, my dear, granting that a man cannot in these days be a hero in a wig, and granting that a hero cannot or should not have a sober understanding, will you give me leave to ask, whether you have positively determined that none but heroes and heroines should live, or love, or marry, or be happy in this mortal world?"

"Heaven forbid!" said Rosamond, "particularly as I am not a heroine."

"And as only a few hundred millions of people in the world are in the same condition," added Mrs Percy.

"And those, perhaps, not the least happy of human beings," said Caroline. "Be that as it may, I think it cannot be denied that Mr Gresham has, in a high degree, one of the qualities which ought to distinguish a hero."

"What?" said Rosamond eagerly.

"Generosity," replied Caroline; "and his large fortune puts it in his power to show that quality upon a scale more extended than is usually allowed even to the heroes of romance."

"True—very true," said Rosamond, smiling: "generosity might make a hero of him if he were not a merchant—a merchant!—a Percy ought not to marry a merchant."

"Perhaps, my dear," said Mrs Percy, "you don't know that half, at least, of all the nobility in England have married into the families of merchants; therefore, in the opinion of half the nobility of England, there can be nothing discreditable or derogatory in such an alliance."

"I know, ma'am, such things are; but then you will allow they are usually done for money, and that makes the matter worse. If the sons of noble families marry the daughters of mercantile houses, it is merely to repair the family fortune. But a nobleman has great privileges. If he marry beneath himself, his low wife is immediately raised by her wedding-ring to an equality with the high and mighty husband—her name is forgotten in her title—her vulgar relations are left in convenient obscurity: the husband never thinks of taking notice of them; and the wife, of course, may let it alone if she pleases. But a woman, in our rank of life, must bear her husband's name, and must also

bear all his relations, be they ever so vulgar. Now, Caroline, honestly—how should you like this?"

"Honestly not at all," said Caroline; "but as we cannot have everything we like, or avoid everything we dislike, in life, we must balance the good against the evil, when we are to make our choice: and if I found certain amiable, estimable qualities in a character, I think that I might esteem, love, and marry him, even though he had a vulgar name and vulgar connexions. I fairly acknowledge, however, that it must be something superior in the man's character which could balance the objection to vulgarity in my mind."

"Very well, my dear," said Rosamond, "do you be a martyr to vulgarity and philosophy, if you like it—but excuse me, if you please. Since you, who have so much strength of mind, fairly acknowledge that this objection is barely to be overcome by your utmost efforts, do me the favour, do me the justice, not to expect from me a degree of civil courage quite above my powers."

Caroline, still believing that Rosamond was only bringing forward all the objections that might be raised against her wishes, replied, "Fortunately, my dear Rosamond, you are not called upon for any such effort of philosophy, for Mr Gresham is not vulgar, nor is even his name vulgar, and he cannot have any vulgar relations, because he has no relations of any description—I heard him say, the other day, that he was an isolated being."

"That is a comfort," said Rosamond, laughing; "that is a great thing in his favour; but if he has not relations, he has connexions. What do you think of those horrible Pantons? This instant I think I see old Panton cooling himself—wig pushed back—waistcoat unbuttoned—and protuberant Mrs Panton

with her bay wig and artificial flowers. And not the Pantons only, but you may be sure there are hordes of St Mary Axe cockneys, that would pour forth upon *Mrs Gresham*, with overwhelming force, and with partnership and old-acquaintance-sake claims upon her public notice and private intimacy. Come, come, my dear Caroline, don't speak against your conscience—you know you never could withstand the hordes of *vulgarians*."

"These vulgarians in buckram," said Caroline, "have grown from two to two hundred in a trice, in your imagination, Rosamond: but consider that old Panton, against whom you have such an invincible horror, will, now that he has quarrelled with Erasmus, probably very soon eat himself out of the world; and I don't see that you are bound to Mr Gresham's dead partner's widow—is this your only objection to Mr Gresham?"

"My only objection! Oh no! don't flatter yourself that in killing old Panton you have struck off all my objections. Independently of vulgar relations, or connexions, and the disparity of age, my grand objection remains. But I will address myself to my mother, for you are not a good person for judging of prejudices—you really don't understand them, my dear Caroline; one might as well talk to Socrates. You go to work with logic, and get one between the horns of a wicked dilemma directly—I will talk to my mother; she understands prejudices."

"Your mother thanks you," said Mrs Percy, smiling, "for your opinion of her understanding."

"My mother is the most indulgent of mothers, and, besides, the most candid, and therefore I know she will confess to me that she herself cherishes a little darling prejudice in favour of birth and family, a *leetle* prejudice—well covered by good-nature and politeness

—but still a secret, invincible antipathy to low-born people."

"To low-bred people, I grant."

"Oh, mother! you are *upon your candour*—my dear mother, not only low-bred, but low-born: confess you have a—what shall I call it?—an *indisposition* towards low-born people."

"Since you put me upon my candour," said Mrs Percy, "I am afraid I must confess that I am conscious of a little of the aristocratic weakness you impute to me."

"Impute!—No imputation, in my opinion," cried Rosamond. "I do not think it any weakness."

"But I do," said Mrs Percy—"I consider it as a weakness; and bitterly should I reproach myself, if I saw any weakness, any prejudice of mine, influence my children injuriously in the most material circumstance of their lives, and where their happiness is at stake. So, my dear Rosamond, let me entreat——"

"Oh! mother, don't let the tears come into your eyes; and, without any entreaties, I will do just as you please."

"My love," said Mrs Percy, "I have no pleasure but that you should please yourself and judge for yourself, without referring to any prepossession of mine. And lest your imagination should deceive you as to the extent of my aristocratic prejudices, let me explain. The *indisposition*, which I have acknowledged I feel towards low-born people, arises, I believe, chiefly from my taking it for granted that they cannot be thoroughly well-bred. I have accidentally seen examples of people of inferior birth, who, though they had risen to high station, and though they had acquired, in a certain degree, polite manners, and had been metamorphosed by fashion, to all outward appearance, into perfect gentry, yet betrayed some marks of

their origin, or of their early education, whenever their passions or their interests were touched: then some awkward gesture, some vulgar expression, some mean or mercenary sentiment, some habitual contraction of mind, recurred."

"True, true, most true!" said Rosamond. "It requires two generations, at least, to wash out the stain of vulgarity: neither a gentleman nor a gentlewoman can be made in less than two generations; therefore I never will marry a low-born man, if he had every perfection under the sun."

"Nay, my dear, that is too strong," said Mrs Percy. "Hear me, my dearest Rosamond. I was going to tell you, that my experience has been so limited, that I am not justified in drawing from it any general conclusion. And even to the most positive and rational general rules you know there are exceptions."

"That is a fine general softening clause," said Rosamond; "but now positively, mother, would you have ever consented to marry a merchant?"

"Certainly, my dear, if your father had been a merchant, I should have married him," replied Mrs Percy.

"Well, I except my father. To put the question more fairly, may I ask, do you wish that your daughter should marry a merchant?"

"As I endeavoured to explain to you before, *that* depends entirely upon what the merchant is, and upon what my daughter feels for him."

Rosamond sighed.

"I ought to observe, that merchants are now quite in a different class from what they were at the first rise of commerce in these countries," continued her mother. "Their education, their habits of thinking, knowledge, and manners, are improved, and, conse-

quently, their *consideration*, their rank in society, is raised. In our days, some of the best informed, most liberal, and most respectable men in the British dominions are merchants. I could not, therefore, object to my daughter's marrying a merchant; but I should certainly inquire anxiously what sort of a merchant he was. I do not mean that I should inquire whether he was concerned in this or that branch of commerce, but whether his mind was free from everything mercenary and illiberal. I have done so with respect to Mr Gresham, and I can assure you solemnly, that Mr Gresham's want of the advantage of high birth is completely counterbalanced in my opinion by his superior qualities. I see in him a cultivated, enlarged, generous mind. I have seen him tried, where his passions and his interests have been nearly concerned, and I never saw in him the slightest tincture of vulgarity in manner or sentiment: therefore, my dear daughter, if he has made an impression on your heart, do not, on my account, conceal or struggle against it; because, far from objecting to Mr Gresham for a son-in-law, I should prefer him to any gentleman or nobleman who had not his exalted character."

"There!" cried Caroline, with a look of joyful triumph, "there! my dear Rosamond, now your heart must be quite at ease!"

But looking at Rosamond at this moment, she saw no expression of joy or pleasure in her countenance; and Caroline was now convinced that she had been mistaken about Rosamond's feelings.

"Really and truly, mother, you think all this?"

"Really and truly, my dear, no motive upon earth would make me disguise my opinions, or palliate even my prejudices, when you thus consult me, and depend upon my truth. And now that I have said this much,

I will say no more, lest I should bias you on the other side: I will leave you to your own feeling and excellent understanding."

Rosamond's affectionate heart was touched so by his mother's kindness that she could not for some minutes repress her tears. When she recovered her voice, she assured her mother and Caroline, with a seriousness and an earnest frankness which at once convinced them of her truth, that she had not the slightest partiality for Mr Gresham; that, on the contrary, his age was to her a serious objection. She had feared that her friends might wish for the match, and that being conscious she had no other objection to make to Mr Gresham except that she could not love him, she had hesitated for want of a better reason, when her mother first began this cross-examination.

Relieved by this thorough explanation, and by the conviction that her father, mother, and sister were perfectly satisfied with her decision, Rosamond was at ease, as far as she herself was concerned. But she still dreaded to see Mr Gresham again. She was excessively sorry to have given him pain, and she feared not a little that in rejecting the lover she should lose the friend.

Mr Gresham, however, was of too generous a character to cease to be the friend of the woman he loved, merely because she could not return his passion: it is wounded pride, not disappointed affection, that turns immediately from love to hatred.

Rosamond was spared the pain of seeing Mr Gresham again at this time, for he left the Hills, and set out immediately for London, where he was recalled by news of the sudden death of his partner. Old Mr Panton had been found dead in his bed, after having supped inordinately the preceding night upon eel-pie. It was indispensably necessary that

Mr Gresham should attend at the opening of Panton's will, and Mrs Panton wrote to represent this in urgent terms. Mr Henry was gone to Amsterdam; he had, for some time previously to the death of Mr Panton, obtained the partnership's permission to go over to the Dutch merchants, their correspondents in Amsterdam, to fill a situation in their house, for which his knowledge of the Dutch, French, and Spanish languages eminently qualified him.

When Mr Henry had solicited this employment, Mr Gresham had been unwilling to part with him, but had yielded to the young man's earnest entreaties, and to the idea that this change would, in a lucrative point of view, be materially for Mr Henry's advantage.

Some apology to the lovers of romance may be expected for this abrupt transition from the affairs of the heart to the affairs of the counting-house—but so it is in real life. We are sorry, but we cannot help it—we have neither sentiments nor sonnets ready for every occasion.

Chapter xvii.

LETTER FROM ALFRED.

This appears to have been written some months after the vacation spent at the Hills.

"Oh! thoughtless mortals, ever blind to fate,
Too soon dejected, and too soon elate."

"YOU remember, I am sure, my dear father, how angry we were some time ago with that man, whose name I never would tell you, the man whom Rosamond called counsellor *Nameless*, who snatched a *good point* from me in arguing Mr Hauton's

cause. This very circumstance has been the means of introducing me to the notice of three men, all eminent in their profession, and each with the same inclination to serve me, according to their respective powers—a solicitor, a barrister, and a judge. Solicitor Babington (by-the-bye, pray tell Rosamond in answer to her question whether there is an honest attorney, that there are no such things as *attorneys* now in England—they are all turned into solicitors and agents, just as every *shop* is become a *warehouse*, and every *service* a *situation*), Babington, the solicitor employed against us in that suit, a man who knows, without practising them, all the tricks of the trade, and who is a thoroughly honest man, saw the trick that was played by *Nameless*, and took occasion afterwards to recommend me to several of his own clients. Upon the strength of this *point* briefs appeared on my table, day after day—two guineas, three guineas, five guineas! comfortable sight! But far more comfortable, more gratifying, the kindness of counsellor Friend: a more benevolent man never existed. I am sure the profession of the law has not contracted his heart, and yet you never saw or can conceive a man more intent upon his business. I believe he eats, drinks, and sleeps upon law: he has the reputation, in consequence, of being one of the soundest of our lawyers—the best opinion in England. He seems to make the cause of every client his own, and is as anxious as if his private property depended on the fate of each suit. He sets me a fine example of labour, perseverance, professional enthusiasm, and rectitude. He is one of the very best friends a young lawyer like me could have; he puts me in the way I should go, and keeps me in it by showing that it is not a matter of chance, but of certainty, that this is the right road to fortune and to fame.

"Mr Friend has sometimes a way of paying a com-

pliment as if he was making a reproach, and of doing a favour as a matter of course. Just now I met him, and apropos to some observations I happened to make on a cause in which he is engaged, he said to me, as if he was half angry, though I knew he was thoroughly pleased, 'Quick parts! Yes, so I see you have: but take care—in your profession 'tis often "Most haste, worst speed;" not but what there are happy exceptions, examples of lawyers, who have combined judgment with wit, industry with genius, and law with eloquence. But these instances are rare, very rare; for the rarity of the case worth studying. Therefore dine with me to-morrow, and I will introduce you to one of these exceptions.'

"The person in question, I opine, is the Lord Chief-Justice—and Friend could not do me a greater favour than to introduce me to one whom, as you know, I have long admired in public, and with whom, independently of any professional advantage, I have ardently wished to be acquainted.

"I have been told——I cannot tell you what—for here's the bell-man. I don't wonder 'the choleric man' knocked down the postman for blowing his horn in his ear.

"Abruptly yours,
"Alfred Percy."

Alfred had good reason to desire to be acquainted with this Lord Chief-Justice. Some French writer says, "*Qu'il faut plier les grandes ailes de l'éloquence pour entrer dans un salon.*" The Chief-Justice did so with peculiar ease. He possessed perfect conversational *tact*, with great powers of wit, humour, and all that felicity of allusion, which an uncommonly recollective memory, acting on stores of various knowledge, can alone command. He really conversed; he

did not merely tell stories, or make bon-mots, or confine himself to the single combat of close argument, or the flourish of declamation; but he alternately followed and led, threw out and received ideas, knowing how to listen full as well as how to talk, remembering always Lord Chesterfield's experienced maxim, "That it is easier to hear than to talk yourself into the good opinion of your auditors." It was not, however, from policy, but from benevolence, that the Chief-Justice made so good a hearer. It has been said, and with truth, that with him a *good point* never passed unnoticed in a public court, nor was a *good thing* ever lost upon him in private company. Of the number of his own good things fewer are in circulation than might be expected. The best conversation, that which rises from the occasion, and which suits the moment, suffers most from repetition. Fitted precisely to the peculiar time and place, the best things cannot bear transplanting.

The day Alfred Percy was introduced to the Chief-Justice, the conversation began, from some slight remarks made by one of the company, on the acting of Mrs Siddons. A lady who had just been reading the Memoirs of the celebrated French actress, Mademoiselle Clairon, spoke of the astonishing pains which she took to study her parts, and to acquire what the French call *l'air noble*, continually endeavouring, on the most common occasions, when she was off the stage, to avoid all awkward motions, and in her habitual manner to preserve an air of grace and dignity. This led the Chief-Justice to mention the care which Lord Chatham, Mr Pitt, and other great orators have taken to form their habits of speaking, by unremitting attention to their language in private as well as in public. He maintained that no man *can* speak with ease and security in public till custom has brought him to feel it as a moral impossibility that he could be guilty of any

petty vulgarism, or that he could be convicted of any capital sin against grammar.

Alfred felt anxious to hear the Chief-Justice farther on this subject, but the conversation was dragged back to Mademoiselle Clairon. The lady by whom she was first mentioned declared she thought that all Mademoiselle Clairon's studying must have made her a very unnatural actress. The Chief-Justice quoted the answer which Mademoiselle Clairon gave, when she was reproached with having too much art.—"*De l'art! et que voudroit-on donc que j'eusse? Etois-je Andromaque? Etois-je Phédre?*"

Alfred observed that those who complained of an actress's having too much art should rather complain of her having too little—of her not having art enough to conceal her art.

The Chief-Justice honoured Alfred by a nod and a smile.

The lady, however, protested against this doctrine, and concluded by confessing that she always did and always should prefer nature to art.

From this commonplace confession, the Chief-Justice, by a playful cross-examination, presently made it apparent that we do not always know what we mean by art and what by nature; that the ideas are so mixed in civilized society, and the words so inaccurately used, both in common conversation and in the writings of philosophers, that no metaphysical prism can separate or reduce them to their primary meaning. Next he touched upon the distinction between art and artifice. The conversation branched out into remarks on grace and affectation, and thence to the different theories of beauty and taste, with all which he *played* with a master's hand.

A man accustomed to speak to numbers perceives immediately when his auditors seize his ideas, and

knows instantly, by the assent and expression of the eye, to whom they are new or to whom they are familiar. The Chief-Justice discovered that Alfred Percy had superior knowledge, literature, and talents, even before he spoke, by his manner of listening. The conversation presently passed from *l'air noble* to *le style noble*, and to the French laws of criticism, which prohibit the descending to allusions to arts and manufactures. This subject he discussed deeply, yet rapidly observed how taste is influenced by different governments and manners—remarked how the strong line of demarcation formerly kept in France between the nobility and the citizens had influenced taste in writing and in eloquence, and how our more *popular* government not only admitted allusions to the occupations of the lower classes, but required them. Our orators at elections, and in Parliament, must speak so as to come home to the feelings and vocabulary of constituents. Examples from Burke, and others, the Chief-Justice said, might be brought in support of this opinion.

Alfred was so fortunate as to recollect some apposite illustrations from Burke, and from several of our great orators, Wyndham, Erskine, Mackintosh, and Romilly. As Alfred spoke, the Chief-Justice's eye brightened with approbation, and it was observed that he afterwards addressed to him particularly his conversation; and, more flattering still, that he went deeper into the subject which he had been discussing. From one of the passages which had been mentioned, he took occasion to answer the argument of the French critics, who justify their taste by asserting that it is the taste of the ancients. Skilled in classical as in modern literature, he showed that the ancients had made allusions to arts and manufactures, as far as their knowledge went; but, as he observed, in modern times new arts and sciences afford fresh subjects of allusion unknown

to the ancients: consequently we ought not to restrict our taste by exclusive reverence for classical precedents. On these points it is requisite to reform the pandects of criticism.

Another passage from Burke, to which Alfred had alluded, the Chief-Justice thought too rich in ornament. "Ornaments," he said, "if not kept subordinate, however intrinsically beautiful, injure the general effect—therefore a judicious orator will sacrifice all such as draw the attention from his principal design."

Alfred Percy, in support of this opinion, cited the example of the Spanish painter, who obliterated certain beautiful silver vases, which he had introduced in a picture of the Lord's Supper, because he found, that at first view every spectator's eye was caught by these splendid ornaments, and every one extolled their exquisite finish, instead of attending to the great subject of the piece.

The Chief-Justice was so well pleased with the conversation of our young barrister, that, at parting, he gave Alfred an invitation to his house. The conversation had been very different from what might have been expected: metaphysics, belles-lettres, poetry, plays, criticism—what a range of ideas, far from Coke and Seldon, was gone over this evening in the course of a few hours! Alfred had reason to be more and more convinced of the truth of his father's favourite doctrine, that the general cultivation of the understanding, and the acquirement of general knowledge, are essential to the attainment of excellence in any profession, useful to a young man particularly in introducing him to the notice of valuable friends and acquaintance.

An author well skilled in the worst parts of human nature has asserted, that "nothing is more tiresome than praises in which we have no manner of share." Yet we, who have a better opinion of our kind, trust

that there are some who can sympathize in the enthusiasm of a good and young mind, struck with splendid talents and with a superior character; therefore we venture to insert some of the warm eulogiums, with which we find our young lawyer's letters filled.

"My dear Father,

"I have only a few moments to write, but cannot delay to answer your question about the Chief-Justice. *Disappointed*—no danger of that—he far surpasses my expectations. It has been said that he never opened a book, that he never heard a common ballad, or saw a workman at his trade, without learning something, which he afterwards turned to good account. This you may see in his public speeches, but I am more completely convinced of it since I have heard him converse. His illustrations are drawn from the workshop, the manufactory, the mine, the mechanic, the poet—from every art and science, from everything in nature, animate or inanimate—

'From gems, from flames, from orient rays of light,
The richest lustre makes his purple bright.'

"Perhaps I am writing his panegyric because he is my Lord Chief-Justice, and because I dined with him yesterday, and am to dine with him again to-morrow.

"Yours affectionately,
"Alfred Percy."

In a subsequent letter he shows that his admiration increased, instead of diminishing, upon a more intimate acquaintance with its object.

"High station," says Alfred, "appears to me much more desirable, since I have known this great man. He makes rank so gracious, and shows that it is a

pleasurable, not a 'painful pre-eminence,' when it gives the power of raising others, and of continually doing kind and generous actions. Mr Friend tells me, that, before the Chief-Justice was so high as he is now, without a rival in his profession, he was ever the most generous man to his competitors. I am sure he is now the most kind and condescending to his inferiors. In company he is never intent upon himself, seems never anxious about his own dignity or his own fame. He is sufficiently sure of both to be quite at ease. He excites my ambition, and exalts its nature and value.

"He has raised my esteem for my profession, by showing the noble use that can be made of it, in defending right and virtue. He has done my mind good in another way: he has shown me that professional labour is not incompatible with domestic pleasures. I wish you could see him as I do, in the midst of his family, with his fine children playing about him, with his wife, a charming cultivated woman, who adores him, and who is his best companion and friend. Before I knew the Chief-Justice, I had seen other great lawyers and judges, some of them crabbed old bachelors, others uneasily yoked to vulgar helpmates—having married early in life women whom they had dragged up as they rose, but who were always pulling them down—had seen some of these learned men sink into mere epicures, and become dead to intellectual enjoyment—others, with higher minds, and originally fine talents, I had seen in premature old age, with understandings contracted and palsied by partial or overstrained exertion, worn out, mind and body, and only late, very late in life, just attaining wealth and honours, when they were incapable of enjoying them. This had struck me as a deplorable and discouraging spectacle—a sad termination of a life of labour. But now I see a man in the prime of life, in the full vigour of all his intellectual

faculties and moral sensibilities, with a high character, fortune, and professional honours, all obtained by his own merit and exertions, with the prospect of health and length of days to enjoy and communicate happiness. Exulting in the sight of this resplendent luminary, and conscious that it will guide and cheer me forwards, I 'bless the useful light.'"

Our young lawyer was so honestly enthusiastic in his admiration of this great man, and was so full of the impression that had been made on his mind, that he forgot in this letter to advert to the advantage which, in a professional point of view, he might derive from the good opinion formed of him by the Chief-Justice. In consequence of solicitor Babington's telling his clients the share which Alfred had in winning Colonel Hauton's cause, he was employed in a suit of considerable importance, in which a great landed property was at stake. It was one of those standing suits which last from year to year, and which seem likely to linger on from generation to generation. Instead of considering his brief in this cause merely as a means of obtaining a fee, instead of contenting himself to make some *motion of course*, which fell to his share, Alfred set himself seriously to study the case, and searched indefatigably for all the precedents that could bear upon it. He was fortunate enough, or rather he was persevering enough, to find an old case in point, which had escaped the attention of the other lawyers. Mr Friend was one of the senior counsel in this cause, and he took generous care that Alfred's merit should not now, as upon a former occasion, be concealed. Mr Friend prevailed upon his brother barristers to agree in calling upon Alfred to speak to his own *case in point*; and the Chief-Justice, who presided, said, "This case is new to me. This had escaped me, Mr Percy; I

must take another day to reconsider the matter, before I can pronounce judgment."

This from the Chief-Justice, with the sense which Alfred's brother barristers felt of his deserving such notice, was of immediate and material advantage to our young lawyer. Attorneys and solicitors turned their eyes upon him, briefs began to flow in, and his diligence increased with his business. As junior counsel, he still had little opportunity in the common course of things of distinguishing himself, as it frequently fell to his share only to say a few words; but he never failed to make himself master of every case in which he was employed. And it happened one day, when the senior counsel was ill, the judge called upon the next barrister.—"Mr Trevors, are you prepared?"

"My lord—I can't say—no, my lord."

"Mr Percy, are you prepared?"

"Yes, my lord."

"So I thought—always prepared: go on, sir—go on, Mr Percy."

He went on, and spoke so ably, and with such comprehensive knowledge of the case and of the law, that he obtained a decision in favour of his client, and established his own reputation as a man of business and of talents, who was *always prepared*. For the manner in which he was brought forward and distinguished by the Chief-Justice he was truly grateful. This was a species of patronage honourable both to the giver and the receiver. Here was no favour shown disproportionate to deserts, but here was just distinction paid to merit, and generous discernment giving talents opportunity of developing themselves. These opportunities would only have been the ruin of a man who could not show himself equal to the occasion; but this was not the case with Alfred. His capacity, like the fairy tent, seemed to enlarge so as to contain all that it was

necessary to comprehend: and new powers appeared in him in new situations.

Alfred had been introduced by his brother Erasmus to some of those men of literature with whom he had become acquainted at Lady Spilsbury's good dinners. Among these was a Mr Dunbar, a gentleman who had resided for many years in India, from whom Alfred, who constantly sought for information from all with whom he conversed, had learned much of India affairs. Mr Dunbar had collected some curious tracts on Mohammedan law, and glad to find an intelligent auditor on his favourite subject, a subject not generally interesting, he willingly communicated all he knew to Alfred, and lent him his manuscripts and scarce tracts, which Alfred, in the many leisure hours that a young lawyer can command before he gets into practice, had studied, and of which he had made himself master. It happened a considerable time afterwards that the East India Company had a cause—one of the greatest causes ever brought before our courts of law—relative to the demand of some native bankers in Hindostan against the company for upwards of four millions of rupees. This Mr Dunbar, who had a considerable interest in the cause, and who was intimate with several of the directors, recommended it to them to employ Mr Alfred Percy, who, as he knew, had had ample means of information, and who had studied a subject of which few of his brother barristers had any knowledge. The very circumstance of his being employed in a cause of such importance was of great advantage to him; and the credit he gained by accurate and uncommon knowledge in the course of the suit at once raised his reputation amongst the best judges, and *established* him in the courts.

On another occasion, Alfred's moral character was as serviceable as his literary taste had been in recom-

mending him to his clients. Buckhurst Falconer had introduced him to a certain Mr Clay, known by the name of *French* Clay. In a conversation after dinner, when the ladies had retired, Mr Clay had boasted of his successes with the fair sex, and had expressed many sentiments that marked him for a profligate coxcomb.

Alfred felt disgust and indignation for this parade of vice. There was one officer in company who strongly sympathised in his feelings; this led to further acquaintance and mutual esteem. This officer soon afterwards married Lady Harriot ——, a beautiful young woman, with whom he lived happily for some time, till unfortunately, while her husband was abroad with his regiment, chance brought the wife, at a watering-place, into the company of French Clay, and imprudence, the love of flattery, coquetry, and self-confidence, made her a victim to his vanity. Love he had none—nor she either—but her disgrace was soon discovered, or revealed; and her unhappy and almost distracted husband immediately commenced a suit against Clay. He chose Alfred Percy for his counsel. In this cause, where strong feelings of indignation were justly roused, and where there was room for oratory, Alfred spoke with such force and pathos that every honest heart was touched. The verdict of the jury showed the impression which he had made upon them: his speech was universally admired; and those who had till now known him only as a man of business, and a sound lawyer, were surprised to find him suddenly display such powers of eloquence. Counsellor Friend's plain advice to him had always been, "Never harangue about nothing: if your client require it, he is a fool, and never mind him; never speak till you've something to say, and then only say what you have to say.

> 'Words are like leaves, and where they most abound,
> Much fruit of solid sense is seldom found.'"

Friend now congratulated Alfred with all his honest affectionate heart, and said, with a frown that struggled hard with a smile, "Well, I believe I must allow you to be an orator. But, take care—don't let the lawyer merge in the advocate. Bear it always in mind, that a mere man of words at the bar—or indeed anywhere else—is a mere man of straw."

The Chief-Justice, who knew how to say the kindest things in the most polite manner, was heard to observe that "Mr Percy had done wisely, to begin by showing that he had laid a solid foundation of law, on which the ornaments of oratory could be raised high, and supported securely."

French Clay's *affair* with Lady Harriot had been much talked of in the fashionable world; from a love of scandal, or a love of justice, from zeal in the cause of morality, or from natural curiosity, her trial had been a matter of general interest to the ladies, young and old. Of consequence Mr Alfred Percy's speech was *prodigiously* read, and, from various motives, highly applauded. When a man begins to rise, all hands—all hands but the hands of his rivals—are ready to push him up, and all tongues exclaim, "'Twas I helped!" or, "'Twas what I always foretold!"

The Lady Angelica Headingham now bethought herself that she had a little poem, written by Mr Alfred Percy, which had been given to her long ago by Miss Percy, and of which, at the time she received it, her ladyship had thought so little, that hardly deigning to bestow the customary tribute of a compliment, she had thrown it, scarcely perused, into her writing-box. It was now worth while to rummage for it, and now, when the author had a *name*, her ladyship discovered that the poem was charming—absolutely charming! Such an early indication of talents! Such a happy promise of genius!—Oh! she

had always foreseen that Mr Alfred Percy would make an uncommon figure in the world!

"Bless me! does your ladyship know him?"

"Oh! intimately!—That is, I never saw *him* exactly—but all his family I've known intimately—ages ago in the country."

"I should so like to meet him! And do pray give me a copy of the verses—and me!—and me!"

To work went the pens of all the female amateurs, in scribbling copies of "*The Lawyer's May-day.*"—And away went the fair patroness in search of the author—introduced herself with unabashed grace, invited him for Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday—Engaged? how unfortunate!—Well, for next week? a fortnight hence, three weeks? positively she must have him at her conversazione—she must give him——No, he must give her a day, he must consent to lose a day—so many of her friends and real judges were dying to see him."

To save the lives of so many judges, he consented to lose an evening—the day was fixed—Alfred found her conversazione very brilliant—was admired—and admired others in his turn as much as was expected. It was an agreeable variety of company and of thought to him, and he promised to go sometimes to her ladyship's parties—a promise which delighted her much, particularly as he had not yet given a copy of the verses to Lady Spilsbury. Lady Spilsbury, to whom the verses quickly worked round, was quite angry that her friend Erasmus had not given her an early copy; and now invitations the most pressing came from Lady Spilsbury to her excellent literary dinners. If Alfred had been so disposed, he might, among these fetchers and carriers of bays, have been extolled to the skies; but he had too much sense and prudence to lose the substance for the shadow, to sink a solid character into

a *drawing-room reputation.* Of this he had seen the folly in Buckhurst Falconer's case, and now, if any farther warning on this subject had been wanting, he would have taken it from the example of *poor* Seebright, the poet, whom he met the second time he went to Lady Angelica Headingham's. *Poor Seebright*, as the world already began to call him, from being an object of admiration, was beginning to sink into an object of pity. Instead of making himself independent by steady exertions in any respectable profession, instead of making his way in the republic of letters by some solid work of merit, he frittered away his time among fashionable amateurs, feeding upon their flattery, and living on in the vain hope of patronage. Already the flight of his genius had been restrained, the force of his wing impaired; instead of soaring superior, he kept hovering near the earth; his "kestrel courage fell," he appeared to be almost tamed to the domestic state to which he was reduced—yet now and then a rebel sense of his former freedom, and of his present degradation, would appear. "Ah! if I were but independent as you are! If I had but followed a profession as you have done!" said he to Alfred, when, apart from the crowd, they had an opportunity of conversing confidentially.

Alfred replied that it was not yet too late, that it was never too late for a man of spirit and talents to make himself independent; he then suggested to Mr Seebright various ways of employing his powers, and pointed out some useful and creditable literary undertaking, by which he might acquire reputation. Seebright listened, his eye eagerly catching at each new idea the first moment, the next turning off to something else, raising objections futile or fastidious, seeing nothing impossible in any dream of his imagination, where no effort of exertion was requisite,

but finding everything impracticable when he came to sober reality, where he was called upon to labour. In fact, he was one of the sort of people who do not know what they want, or what they would be, who complain and complain; disappointed and discontented, at having sunk below their powers and their hopes, and are yet without capability of persevering exertion to emerge from their obscurity. Seebright was now become an inefficient being, whom no one could assist to any good purpose. Alfred, after a long, mazy, fruitless conversation, was convinced that the case was hopeless, and, sincerely pitying him, gave it up as irremediable. Just as he had come to this conclusion, and had sunk into silence, a relation of his, whom he had not seen for a considerable time, entered the room, and passed by without noticing him. She was so much altered in her appearance, that he could scarcely believe he saw Lady Jane Granville; she looked out of spirits, and careworn. He immediately observed that less attention was paid to her than she used to command; she had obviously sunk considerably in importance, and appeared to feel this keenly. Upon inquiry, Alfred learnt that she had lost a large portion of her fortune by a lawsuit, which she had managed, that is to say, mismanaged, for herself; and she was still at law for the remainder of her estate, which, notwithstanding her right was undoubted, it was generally supposed that she would lose, for the same reason that occasioned her former failure, her pertinacity in following her own advice only. Alfred knew that there had been some misunderstanding between Lady Jane and his family, that she had been offended by his sister Caroline having declined accepting her invitation to town, and from Mr and Mrs Percy having differed with her in opinion as to the value of the *patronage* of fashion: she had also been

displeased with Erasmus about Sir Amyas Courtney. Notwithstanding all this, he was convinced that Lady Jane, whatever her opinions might be, and whether mistaken or not, had been actuated by sincere regard for his family, for which he and they were grateful; and now was the time to show it, now when he was coming into notice in the world, and she declining in importance. Therefore, though she had passed by him without recognizing him, he went immediately and spoke to her in so respectful and kind a manner, paid her the whole evening such marked attention, that she was quite pleased and touched. In reality, she had been vexed with herself for having persisted so long in her resentment; she wished for a fair opportunity for a reconciliation, and she rejoiced that Alfred thus opened the way for it. She invited him to come to see her the next day, observing, as she put her card into his hand, that she no longer lived in her fine house in St James's Place. Now that his motives could not be mistaken, he was assiduous in his visits; and when he had sufficiently obtained her confidence, he ventured to touch upon her affairs. She, proud to convince him of her abilities as a woman of business, explained her whole case, and descanted upon the blunders and folly of her solicitors and counsellors, especially upon the absurdity of the opinions which she had not followed. Her cause depended upon the *replication* she was to put into a plea in special pleading: she thought she saw the way straight before her, and exclaimed vehemently against that love of the crooked path by which her lawyers seemed possessed.

Without disputing the legal soundness of her ladyship's opinion in her own peculiar case, Alfred, beginning at a great distance from her passions, quietly undertook, by relating to her cases which had fallen

under his own knowledge, to convince her that plain common sense and reason could never lead her to the knowledge of the rules of special pleading, or to the proper wording of those answers, on the *letter* of which the fate of a cause frequently depends. He confessed to her that his own understanding had been so shocked at first by the apparent absurdity of the system, that he had almost abandoned the study, and that it had been only in consequence of actual experience that he had at last discovered the utility of those rules. She insisted upon being also convinced before she could submit; but as it is not quite so easy as ladies sometimes think it is to teach any art or science in two words, or to convey, in a moment, to the ignorant, the combined result of study and experience, Alfred declined this task, and could undertake only to show her ladyship, by asking her opinion on various cases which had been decided in the courts, that it was possible she might be mistaken; and that, however superior her understanding, a court of law would infallibly decide according to its own rules.

"But, good heavens! my dear sir," exclaimed Lady Jane, "when, after I have paid the amount of my bond, and every farthing that I owe a creditor, yet this rogue says I have not, is not it a proper answer that I owe him nothing?"

"Pardon me, this would be considered as an evasive plea by the court, or as a *negative pregnant*."

"Oh! if you come to your *negative pregnants*," cried Lady Jane, "it is impossible to understand you —I give up the point."

To this conclusion it had been Alfred's object to bring her ladyship; and when she was fully convinced of the insufficient limits of the human—he never said the female—understanding to comprehend these things without the aid of men learned in the law, he humbly

offered his assistance to guide her out of that labyrinth, into which, unwittingly and without any clue, she had ventured farther and farther, till she was just in the very jaws of nonsuit and ruin. She put her affairs completely into his hands, and promised that she would not farther interfere, even with her advice; for it was upon this condition that Alfred engaged to undertake the management of her cause. Nothing indeed is more tormenting to men of business, than to be pestered with the incessant advice, hopes and fears, cautions and explanations, cunning suggestions, superficial knowledge, and profound ignorance, of lady or gentlemen lawyers. Alfred now begged and obtained permission from the court to amend the Lady Jane Granville's last plea—he thenceforward conducted the business, and played the game of special pleading with such strict and acute attention to the rules, that there were good hopes the remaining portion of her ladyship's fortune, which was now at stake, might be saved. He endeavoured to keep up her spirits and her patience, for of a speedy termination to the business there was no chance. They had to deal with adversaries who knew how, on their side, to protract the pleadings, and to avoid what is called *coming to the point.*

It was a great pleasure to Alfred thus to have it in his power to assist his friends, and the hope of serving them redoubled his diligence. About this time he was engaged in a cause for his brother's friend and Rosamond's admirer, Mr Gresham. A picture-dealer had cheated this gentleman, in the sale of a picture of considerable value. Mr Gresham had bargained for, and bought, an original Guido, wrote his name on the back of it, and directed that it should be sent to him. The painting which was taken to his house had his name written on the back, but was not the original Guido for which he had bargained—it was a copy. The

picture-dealer, however, and two respectable witnesses, were ready to swear positively that this was the identical picture on which Mr Gresham wrote his name—that they saw him write his name, and heard him order that it should be sent to him. Mr Gresham himself acknowledged that the writing was so like his own that he could not venture to deny that it was his, and yet he could swear that this was not the picture for which he had bargained, and on which he had written his name. He suspected it to be a forgery; and was certain that, by some means, one picture had been substituted for another. Yet the defendant had witnesses to prove that the picture never was out of Mr Gresham's sight, from the time he bargained for it, till the moment when he wrote his name on the back, in the presence of the same witnesses.

This chain of evidence they thought was complete, and that it could not be broken. Alfred Percy, however, discovered the nature of the fraud, and, regardless of the boasts and taunts of the opposite party, kept his mind carefully secret, till the moment when he came to cross-examine the witnesses; for, as Mr Friend had observed to him, many a cause had been lost by the impatience of counsel, in showing, beforehand, how it might certainly be won.* By thus revealing the intended mode of attack, opportunity is given to prepare a defence by which it may be ultimately counteracted. In the present case, the defendant, however, came into court secure of victory, and utterly unprepared to meet the truth, which was brought out full upon him when least expected. The fact was, that he had put two pictures into the same frame—the original in front, the copy behind it: on the back of the canvas of the copy Mr Gresham had written his name, never suspecting that it was not the original for which he bargained, and

* See Deinology.

which he thought he actually held in his hand. The witnesses, therefore, swore literally the truth, that they saw him write upon *that* picture; and they believed the picture, on which he wrote, was the identical picture that was sent home to him. One of the witnesses was an honest man, who really believed what he swore, and knew nothing of the fraud, to which the other, a rogue in confederacy with the picture-dealer, was privy. The cross-examination of both was so ably managed, that the honest man was soon made to perceive and the rogue forced to reveal the truth. Alfred had reason to be proud of the credit he obtained for the ability displayed in this cross-examination, but he was infinitely more gratified by having it in his power to gain a cause for his friend, and to restore to Mr Gresham his favourite Guido.

A welcome sight—a letter from Godfrey! the first his family had received from him since he left England. Two of his letters, it appears, had been lost. Alluding to one he had written immediately on hearing of the change in his father's fortune, he observes, that he has kept his resolution of living within his pay; and, after entering into some other family details, he continues as follows: "Now, my dear mother, prepare to hear me recant what I have said against Lord Oldborough. I forgive his lordship all his sins, and I begin to believe, that though he is a statesman, his heart is not yet quite *ossified*. He has recalled our regiment from this unhealthy place, and he has promoted Gascoigne to be our lieutenant-colonel. I say that Lord Oldborough has done all this, because I am sure, from a hint in Alfred's last letter, that his lordship has been the prime mover in the business. But not to keep you in suspense about the facts.

"In my first letter to my father, I told you, that from the moment our late lethargic lieutenant-colonel

came to the island, he took to drinking rum, pure rum, to waken himself—claret, port, and madeira, had lost their power over him. Then came brandy, which he fancied was an excellent preservative against the yellow fever, and the fever of the country. So he died 'boldly by brandy.' Poor fellow! he was boasting to me, the last week of his existence, when he was literally on his deathbed, that his father taught him to drink before he was six years old, by practising him every day, after dinner, in the sublime art of carrying a bumper steadily to his lips. He moreover boasted to me, that when a boy of thirteen at an academy, he often drank two bottles of claret at a sitting; and that, when he went into the army, getting among a jolly set, he brought himself never to feel the worse for any quantity of wine. I don't know what he meant by the worse for it—at forty-five, when I first saw him, he had neither head nor hand left for himself or his country. His hand shook so, that if he had been perishing with thirst, he could not have carried a glass to his lips, till after various attempts in all manner of curves and zigzags, spilling half of it by the way. It was really pitiable to see him—when he was to sign his name I always went out of the room, and left Gascoigne to guide his hand. More helpless still his mind than his body. If his own or England's salvation had depended upon it, he could not, when in the least hurried, have uttered a distinct order, have dictated an intelligible letter; or, in time of need, have recollected the name of any one of his officers, or even his own name—quite imbecile and embruted. But, peace to his ashes—or rather to his dregs—and may there never be such another British colonel!

"Early habits of temperance have not only saved my life, but made my life worth saving. Neither Colonel Gascoigne nor I have ever had a day's serious

illness since we came to the island—but we are the only two that have escaped. Partly from the colonel's example, and partly from their own inclination, all the other officers have drunk hard. Lieutenant R—— is now ill of the fever; Captain H—— (I beg his pardon), now Major H——, will soon follow the colonel to the grave, unless he takes my very disinterested advice, and drinks less. I am laughed at by D—— and V—— and others for this; they ask why the deuce I can't let the major kill himself his own way, and as fast as he pleases, when I should get on a step by it, and that step such a great one. They say none but a fool would do as I do, and I think none but a brute could do otherwise—I can't stand by with any satisfaction, and see a fellow-creature killing himself by inches, even though I have the chance of slipping into his shoes: I am sure the shoes would pinch me confoundedly. If it is my brother-officer's lot to fall in battle, it's very well—I run the same hazard—he dies, as he ought to do, a brave fellow; but to stand by, and see a man die as he ought not to do, and die what is called an *honest fellow!*—I can't do it. H—— at first had a great mind to run me through the body; but, poor man, he is now very fond of me, and if any one can keep him from destroying himself, I flatter myself I shall.

"A thousand thanks to dear Caroline for her letter, and to Rosamond for her journal. They, who have never been an inch from home, cannot conceive how delightful it is, at such a distance, to receive letters from our friends. You remember, in Cook's voyage, his joy at meeting in some distant island with the spoon marked *London*.

"I hope you received my letters, Nos. 1 and 2. Not that there was anything particular in them. You know I never do more than tell the bare facts—not

like Rosamond's journal—with which, by-the-bye, Gascoigne has fallen in love. He sighs, and wishes that Heaven had blessed him with such a sister—for *sister*, read wife. I hope this will encourage Rosamond to write again immediately. No; do not tell what I have just said about Gascoigne, for—who knows the perverse ways of women?—perhaps it might prevent her from writing to me at all. You may tell her, in general, that it is my opinion ladies always write better and do everything better than men — except fight, which Heaven forbid they should ever do in public or private!

"I am glad that Caroline did not marry Mr Barclay, since she did not like him; but by all accounts he is a sensible, worthy man, and I give my consent to his marriage with Lady Mary Pembroke, though, from Caroline's description, I became half in love with her myself. N.B.—I have not been in love above six times since I left England, and but once anything to signify. How does the Marchioness of Twickenham go on?

"Affectionate duty to my father, and love to all the happy people at home.

"Dear mother,

"Your affectionate son,

"G. Percy."

Chapter xxiij.

LETTER FROM ALFRED TO CAROLINE.

"My dear Caroline,—I am going to surprise you—I know it is the most imprudent thing a story-teller can do to give notice or promise of a surprise; but you see, I have such confidence at this moment in my fact, that I hazard this imprudence—Who do you think I have

seen? Guess—guess all round the breakfast-table—father, mother, Caroline, Rosamond—I defy you all—ay, Rosamond, even you, with all your capacity for romance; the romance of real life is beyond all other romances—its coincidences beyond the combinations of the most inventive fancy—even of yours, Rosamond—Granted—go on—Patience, ladies, if you please, and don't turn over the page, or glance to the end of my letter to satisfy your curiosity, but read fairly on, says my father.

"You remember, I hope, the Irishman, O'Brien, to whom Erasmus was so good, and whom Mr Gresham, kind as he always is, took for his porter: when Mr Gresham set off last week for Amsterdam, he gave this fellow leave to go home to his wife, who lives at Greenwich. This morning, the wife came to see my honour to speak to me, and when she did see me she could not speak, she was crying so bitterly; she was in the greatest distress about her husband: he had, she said, in going to see her, been seized by a press-gang, and put on board a tender now on the Thames. Moved by the poor Irishwoman's agony of grief, and helpless state, I went to Greenwich, where the tender was lying, to speak to the captain, to try to obtain O'Brien's release. But upon my arrival there, I found that the woman had been mistaken in every point of her story. In short, her husband was not on board the tender, had never been pressed, and had only stayed away from home the preceding night, in consequence of having met with the captain's servant, one of his countrymen, from the county of Leitrim dear, who had took him home to treat him, and had kept him all night to sing, 'St Patrick's day in the morning,' and to drink a good journey, and a quick passage, across the salt water to his master, which he could not refuse. Whilst

I was looking at my watch, and regretting my lost morning, a gentleman, whose servant had really been pressed, came up to speak to the captain, who was standing beside me. The gentleman had something striking and noble in his whole appearance; but his address and accent, which were those of a foreigner, did not suit the fancy of my English captain, who, putting on the surly air, with which he thought it for his honour and for the honour of his country to receive a Frenchman, as he took this gentleman to be, replied in the least satisfactory manner possible, and in the short language of some seamen, 'Your footman's an Englishman, sir; has been pressed for an able-bodied seaman, which I trust he'll prove; he's aboard the tender, and there he will remain.' The foreigner, who, notwithstanding the politeness of his address, seemed to have a high spirit, and to be fully sensible of what was due from others to him as well as from him to them, replied with temper and firmness. The captain, without giving any reasons, or attending to what was said, reiterated, 'I am under orders, sir; I am acting according to my orders—I can do neither more nor less. The law is as I tell you, sir.'

"The foreigner bowed submission to the law, but expressed his surprise that such should be law in a land of liberty. With admiration he had heard, that, by the English law and British constitution, the property and personal liberty of the lowest, the meanest subject, could not be injured or oppressed by the highest nobleman in the realm, by the most powerful minister, even by the king himself. He had always been assured that the king could not put his hand into the purse of the subject, or take from him to the value of a single penny; that the sovereign could not deprive the meanest of the people unheard, untried, uncondemned, of a single hour of his liberty, or touch

a hair of his head; he had always, on the Continent, heard it the boast of Englishmen, that when even a slave touched English ground he became free: 'Yet now, to my astonishment,' pursued the foreigner, 'what do I see?—a freeborn British subject returning to his native land, after an absence of some years, unoffending against any law, innocent, unsuspected of all crime, a faithful domestic, an excellent man, prevented from returning to his family and his home, put on board a king's ship, unused to hard labour, condemned to work like a galley slave, doomed to banishment, perhaps to death!—Good heavens! In all this where is your English liberty? Where is English justice, and the spirit of your English law?'

"'And who the devil are you, sir?' cried the captain, 'who seem to know so much and so little of English law?'

"'My name, if that be of any consequence, is Count Albert Altenberg.'

("Well, Caroline, you are surprised.—'No,' says Rosamond; 'I guessed it was he, from the first moment I heard he was a foreigner, and had a noble air.')

"'Altenberg,' repeated the captain; 'that's not a French name:—Why, you are not a Frenchman!'

"'No, sir—a German.'

"'Ah ha!' cried the captain, suddenly changing his tone, 'I thought you were not a Frenchman, or you could not talk so well of English law, and feel so much for English liberty; and now then, since that's the case, I'll own to you frankly, that in the main I'm much of your mind—and for my own particular share, I'd as lieve the Admiralty had sent me to hell as have ordered me to press on the Thames. But my business is to obey orders—which I will do, by the blessing of God—so good morning to you. As to law, and justice, and all that, talk to him,' said

the captain, pointing with his thumb over his left shoulder to me as he walked off hastily.

"'Poor fellow!' said I; 'this is the hardest part of a British captain's duty, and so he feels it.'

"'Duty!' exclaimed the count—'Duty! pardon me for repeating your word—but can it be his duty? I hope I did not pass proper bounds in speaking to him; but now he is gone, I may say to you, sir—to you, who, if I may presume to judge from your countenance, sympathise in my feelings—this is a fitter employment for an African slave-merchant than for a British officer. The whole scene which I have just beheld there on the river, on the banks, the violence, the struggles I have witnessed there, the screams of the women and children—it is not only horrible, but in England incredible! Is it not like what we have heard of on the coast of Africa with detestation—what your humanity has there forbidden—abolished? And is it possible that the cries of those negroes across the Atlantic can so affect your philanthropists' imaginations, whilst you are deaf or unmoved by these cries of your countrymen, close to your metropolis, at your very gates! I think I hear them still,' said the count, with a look of horror. 'Such a scene I never before beheld! I have seen it—and yet I cannot believe that I have seen it in England.'

"I acknowledged that the sight was terrible; I could not be surprised that the operation of pressing men for the sea service should strike a foreigner as inconsistent with the notion of English justice and liberty, and I admired the energy and strength of feeling which the count showed; but I defended the measure as well as I could, on the plea of necessity.

"'Necessity!' said the count: 'Pardon me if I remind you that necessity is the tyrant's plea.'

"I mended my plea, and changed necessity into

utility—general utility. It was essential to England's defence—to her existence—she could not exist without her navy, and her navy could not be maintained without a press-gang—as I was assured by those who were skilled in naval affairs.

"The count smiled at my evident consciousness of the weakness of my concluding corollary, and observed that, by my own statement, the whole argument depended on the assertions of those who maintained that a navy could not exist without a press-gang. He urged this no farther, and I was glad of it; his horses and mine were at this moment brought up, and we both rode together to town.

"I know that Rosamond, at this instant, is gasping with impatience to hear whether in the course of this ride I spoke of M. de Tourville—and the shipwreck. I did—but not of Euphrosyne: upon that subject I could not well touch. He had heard of the shipwreck, and of the hospitality with which the sufferers had been treated by an English gentleman, and he was surprised and pleased, when I told him that I was the son of that gentleman. Of M. de Tourville the count, I fancy, thinks much the same as you do. He spoke of him as an intriguing diplomatist, of quick talents, but of a mind incapable of anything great or generous. The count went on from speaking of M. de Tourville to some of the celebrated public characters abroad, and to the politics and manners of the different courts and countries of Europe. For so young a man, he has seen and reflected much. He is indeed a very superior person, as he convinced me even in this short ride. You know that Dr Johnson says, 'that you cannot stand for five minutes with a great man under a shed, waiting till a shower is over, without hearing him say something that another man could not say.' But

though the count conversed with me so well and so agreeably, I could see that his mind was, from time to time, absent and anxious; and as we came into town, he again spoke of the press-gang, and of his poor servant—a faithful attached servant, he called him, and I am sure the count is a good master, and a man of feeling. He had offered money to obtain the man's release in vain. A substitute it was at this time difficult to find—the count was but just arrived in London, had not yet presented any of his numerous letters of introduction; he mentioned the names of some of the people to whom these were addressed, and he asked me whether application to any of them could be of service. But none of his letters were to any of the men now in power. Lord Oldborough was the only person I knew whose word would be law in this case, and I offered to go with him to his lordship. This I ventured, my dear father, because I wisely—yes, wisely, as you shall see, calculated that the introduction of a foreigner, fresh from the Continent, and from that court where Cunningham Falconer is now resident envoy, would be agreeable, and might be useful to the minister.

"My friend, Mr Temple, who is as obliging and as much my friend now he is secretary to *the* great man as he was when he was a scrivening nobody in his garret, obtained audience for us directly. I need not detail—indeed I have not time—graciously received—count's business done by a line—Temple ordered to write to Admiralty: Lord Oldborough seemed obliged to me for introducing the count—I saw he wished to have some private conversation with him—rose, and took my leave. Lord Oldborough paid me for my discretion on the spot by a kind look—a great deal from him—and following me to the door of the antechamber, 'Mr Percy, I cannot regret that you have followed your

own independent professional course—I congratulate you upon your success—I have heard of it from many quarters, and always, believe me, with pleasure, on your father's account, and on your own.'

"Next day I found on my table, when I came from the courts, the count's card—when I returned his visit, commissioner Falconer was with him in close converse —confirmed by this in opinion that Lord Oldborough is sucking information—I mean, political secrets—out of the count. The commissioner could not, in common decency, help being 'exceedingly sorry that he and Mrs Falconer had seen so little of me of late,' nor could he well avoid asking me to a concert, to which he invited the count, for the ensuing evening. As the count promised to go, so did I, on purpose to meet him. Adieu, dearest Caroline.

"Most affectionately yours,

"ALFRED PERCY."

To give an account of Mrs Falconer's concert in fashionable style, we should inform the public that Dr Mudge for ever established his fame in "*Buds of Roses;*" and Miss La Grande was astonishing, absolutely astonishing, in "*Frenar vorrei le lagrime*"—quite in Catalani's best manner; but Miss Georgiana Falconer was divine in "*O Giove omnipotente,*" and quite surpassed herself in "*Quanto O quanto è amor possente,*" in which Dr Mudge was also capital: indeed, it would be doing injustice to this gentleman's powers not to acknowledge the universality of his genius.

Perhaps our readers may not feel quite satisfied with this general eulogium, and may observe, that all this might have been learnt from the newspapers of the day. Then we must tell things plainly and simply, but this will not sound nearly so grand, and letting the public behind the scenes will destroy all the stage effect and

illusion. Alfred Percy went to Mrs Falconer's unfashionably early, in hopes that, as Count Altenberg dined there, he might have a quarter of an hour's conversation with him before the musical party should assemble. In this hope Alfred Percy was mistaken. He found in the great drawing-room only Mrs Falconer and two other ladies, whose names he never heard, standing round the fire; the unknown ladies were in close and eager converse about Count Altenberg. "He is so handsome—so polite—so charming!"—"He is very rich—has immense possessions abroad, has not he?"—"Certainly, he has a fine estate in Yorkshire."—"But when did he come to England?"—"How long does he stay?"—"£15,000, no, £20,000 per annum."—"Indeed!"—"Mrs Falconer, has not Count Altenberg £20,000 a year?"

Mrs Falconer, seemingly uninterested, stood silent, looking through her glass at the man who was lighting the argand lamps. "Really, my dear," answered she, "I can't say—I know nothing of Count Altenberg——Take care! that argand!——He's quite a stranger to us—the commissioner met him at Lord Oldborough's, and on Lord Oldborough's account, of course—Vigor, we must have more light, Vigor—wishes to pay him attention——But here's Mr Percy," continued she, turning to Alfred, "can, I dare say, tell you all about these things. I think the commissioner mentioned that it was you, Mr Percy, who introduced the count to Lord Oldborough."

The ladies immediately fixed their surprised and inquiring eyes upon Mr Alfred Percy—he seemed to grow in an instant several feet in their estimation: but he shrunk again when he acknowledged that he had merely met Count Altenberg accidentally at Greenwich—that he knew nothing of the count's estate in Yorkshire, or of his foreign possessions, and was utterly

incompetent to decide whether he had £10,000 or £20,000 per annum.

"That's very odd!" said one of the ladies. "But this much I know, that he is passionately fond of music, for he told me so at dinner."

"Then I am sure he will be charmed to-night with Miss Georgiana," said the confidants.

"But what signifies that," replied the other lady, "if he has not——"

"Mr Percy," interrupted Mrs Falconer, "I have never seen you since that sad affair of Lady Harriot H—— and Lewis Clay;" and putting her arm within Alfred's, she walked him away, talking over the affair, and throwing in a proper proportion of compliment. As she reached the folding doors, at the farthest end of the room, she opened them.

"I have a notion the young people are here." She introduced him into the music-room. Miss Georgiana Falconer, at the pianoforte, with performers, composers, masters, and young ladies, all with music-books round her, sat high in consultation, which Alfred's appearance interrupted—a faint struggle to be civil—an insipid question or two was addressed to him. "Fond of music, Mr Percy? Captain Percy, I think, likes music? You expect Captain Percy home soon?"

Scarcely listening to his answers, the young ladies soon resumed their own conversation, forgot his existence, and went on eagerly with their own affairs.

As they turned over their music-books, Alfred, for some minutes, heard only the names of La Tour, Winter, Von Esch, Lanza, Portugallo, Mortellari, Guglielmi, Sacchini, Sarti, Paisiello, pronounced by male and female voices in various tones of ecstacy and of execration. Then there was an eager search for certain favourite duets, trios, and sets of *cavatinas*. Next he heard, in rapid succession, the names of

Tenducci, Pachierotti, Marchesi, Viganoni, Braham, Gabrielli, Mara, Banti, Grassini, Billington, Catalani. Imagine our young barrister's sense of his profound ignorance, whilst he heard the merits of all dead and living composers, singers, and masters, decided upon by the Miss Falconers. By degrees he began to see a little through the palpable obscure, by which he had at first felt himself surrounded: he discerned that he was in a committee of the particular friends of the Miss Falconers, who were settling what they should sing and play. All, of course, were flattering the Miss Falconers, and abusing their absent friends, those especially who were expected to bear a part in this concert; for instance—"Those two eternal Miss Byngs, with voices like cracked bells, and with their old-fashioned music, Handel, Corelli, and Pergolese, horrid!—And odious little Miss Crotch, who has science but no taste, execution but no expression!" Here they talked a vast deal about expression. Alfred did not understand them, and doubted whether they understood themselves. "Then her voice! how people can call it fine!—powerful, if you will—but overpowering! For my part, I can't stand it, can you?—Everybody knows an artificial shake, when good, is far superior to a natural shake. As to the Miss Barhams, the eldest has no more ear than the table, and the youngest such a thread of a voice!"

"But, mamma," interrupted Miss Georgiana Falconer, "are the Miss La Grandes to be here to-night?"

"Certainly, my dear—you know I could not avoid asking the Miss La Grandes."

"Then, positively," cried Miss Georgiana, her whole face changing, and ill-humour swelling in every feature, "then, positively, ma'am, I can't and won't sing a note!"

"Why, my dear love," said Mrs Falconer; "surely you don't pretend to be afraid of the Miss La Grandes?"

"You!" cried one of the chorus of flatterers—"You! to whom the La Grandes are no more to be compared——"

"Not but that they certainly sing finely, I am told," said Mrs Falconer; "yet I can't say I like their style of singing—and knowledge of music, you know, they don't pretend to."

"Why, that's true," said Miss Georgiana; "but still, somehow, I can never bring out my voice before those girls. If I have any voice at all, it is in the lower part, and Miss La Grande always chooses the lower part—besides, ma'am, you know she regularly takes '*O Giove omnipotente*' from me. But I should not mind *that* even, if she would not attempt poor '*Quanto O quanto è amor possente*'—there's no standing that! Now, really, to hear that so spoiled by Miss La Grande——"

"Hush! my dear," said Mrs Falconer, just as Mrs La Grande appeared——"Oh! my good Mrs La Grande, how kind is this of you to come to me with your poor head! And Miss La Grande and Miss Eliza! We are so much obliged to you, for you know that we could not have done without you."

The Miss La Grandes were soon followed by the Miss Barhams and Miss Crotch, and they were all "*so good, and so kind, and such dear creatures.*" But after the first forced compliments, silence and reserve spread among the young ladies of the Miss Falconers' party. It was evident that the fair professors were mutually afraid and envious of each other, and there was little prospect of harmony of temper. At length the gentlemen arrived. Count Altenberg appeared, and came up to pay his compliments to the Miss Falconers: as he

had not been behind the scenes, all was charming illusion to his eyes. No one could appear more good-humoured, agreeable, and amiable than Miss Georgiana; she was in delightful spirits, well dressed, and admirably supported by her mother. The concert began. But who can describe the anxiety of the rival mothers, each in agonies to have their daughters brought forward and exhibited to the best advantage! Some grew pale, some red—all, according to their different powers of self-command and address, endeavoured to conceal their feelings. Mrs Falconer now shone superior in ease inimitable. She appeared absolutely unconcerned for her own daughter, quite intent upon bringing into notice the talents of the Miss Barhams, Miss Crotch, the Miss La Grandes, &c.

These young ladies in their turn knew and practised the various arts by which at a musical party the unfortunate mistress of the house may be tormented. Some, who were sensible that the company were anxious for their performance, chose to be "*quite out of voice*," till they had been pressed and flattered into acquiescence; one sweet bashful creature must absolutely be forced to the instrument, as a new speaker of the House of Commons was formerly dragged to the chair. Then the instrument was not what one young lady was *used to*; the lights were so placed that another who was near-sighted could not see a note—another could not endure such a glare. One could not sing unless the windows were all open—another could not play unless they were all shut. With perfect complaisance Mrs Falconer ordered the windows to be opened and shut, and again shut and opened; with admirable patience she was, or seemed to be, the martyr to the caprices of the fair musicians; while all the time she so manœuvred as to divide, and govern, and finally to have everything arranged as she pleased.

None but a perfectly cool stander-by, and one previously acquainted with Mrs Falconer's character, could have seen all that Alfred saw. Perhaps the interest he began to take about Count Altenberg, who was the grand object of all her operations, increased his penetration. While the count was engaged in earnest political conversation in one of the inner rooms with the commissioner, Mrs Falconer besought the Miss La Grandes to favour the company. It was impossible for them to resist her polite entreaties. Next she called upon Miss Crotch, and the Miss Barhams; and she contrived that they should sing and play, and play and sing, till they had exhausted the admiration and complaisance of the auditors. Then she relieved attention with some slight things from Miss Arabella Falconer, such as could excite no *sensation* or envy. Presently, after walking about the room, carelessly joining different conversation parties, and saying something obliging to each, she approached the count and the commissioner. Finding that the commissioner had finished all he had to say, she began to reproach him for keeping the count so long from the ladies, and leading him, as she spoke, to the pianoforte, she declared that he had missed such charming things. She *could* not ask Miss Crotch to play any more till she had rested——"Georgiana! for want of something better, do try what you can give us—She will appear to great disadvantage, of course—My dear, I think we have not had *O Giove omnipotente.*"

"I am not equal to that, ma'am," said Georgiana, drawing back: "you should call upon Miss La Grande."

"True, my love; but Miss La Grande has been so very obliging, I could not ask——Try it, my love—I am not surprised you should be diffident after what we have heard; but the count, I am sure, will make allowances."

With amiable and becoming diffidence Miss Georgiana was compelled to comply—the count was surprised and charmed by her voice: then she was prevailed upon to try "*Quanto O quanto è amor possente*"—the count, who was enthusiastically fond of music, seemed quite enchanted; and Mrs Falconer took care that he should have this impression left full and strong upon his mind—supper was announced. The count was placed at the table between Mrs Falconer and Lady Trant—but just as they were sitting down, Mrs Falconer called to Georgiana, who was going, much against her will, to another table, "Take my place, my dear Georgiana, for you know I never eat supper."

Georgiana's countenance, which had been black as night, became all radiant instantly. She took her mamma's place beside the count. Mrs Falconer walked about all supper-time, smiling, and saying obliging things with self-satisfied grace. She had reason indeed to be satisfied with the success of this night's operations. Never once did she appear to look towards the count, or her daughter; but assuredly she saw that things were going on as she wished.

In the meantime Alfred Percy was as heartily tired by the exhibitions of this evening as were many fashionable young men who had been loud in their praises of the performers. Perhaps Alfred was not, however, a perfectly fair judge, as he was disappointed in his own manœuvres, not having been able to obtain two minutes' conversation with the count during the whole evening. In a letter to Rosamond, the next day, he said that Mrs Falconer's concert had been very dull, and he observed that "People can see more of one another in a single day in the country than they can in a year in town." He was farther very eloquent "on the folly of meeting in crowds to say commonplace nothings to

people you do not care for, and to see only the outsides of those with whom you desire to converse."

"Just as I was writing this sentence," continues Alfred, "Count Altenberg called—how fortunate!—how obliging of him to come so early, before I went to the courts. He has put me into good-humour again with the whole world—even with the Miss Falconers. He came to take leave of me—he is going down to the country—with whom do you think?—With Lord Oldborough, during the recess. Did I not tell you that Lord Oldborough would like him—that is, would find that he has information, and can be useful. I hope you will all see the count; indeed I am sure you will. He politely spoke of paying his respects to my father, by whom the shipwrecked foreigners had been so hospitably succoured in their distress. I told him that our family no longer lived in the same place; that we had been obliged to retire to a small estate, in a distant part of the county. I did not trouble him with the history of our family misfortunes; nor did I even mention how the shipwreck, and the carelessness of the Dutch sailors, had occasioned the fire at Percy Hall—though I was tempted to tell him this when I was speaking of M. de Tourville.

"I forgot to tell my father, that the morning when I went with the count to Lord Oldborough's, among a heap of books of heraldry, with which his table was covered, I spied an old book of my father's on the *arte* of deciphering, which he had lent commissioner Falconer years ago. Lord Oldborough, whose eye is quick as a hawk's, saw my eye turn towards it, and he asked me if I knew anything of that book, or of the art of deciphering? Nothing of the art, but something of the book, which I recollected to be my father's. His lordship put it into my hands, and I showed some pencil notes of my father's writing.

Lord Oldborough seemed surprised, and said he did not know this had been among the number of your studies. I told him that you had once been much intent upon Wilkins and Leibnitz's scheme of a universal language, and that I believed this had led you to the art of deciphering. He repeated the words 'Universal language—Ha!—then I suppose it was from Mr Percy that commissioner Falconer learnt all he knew on this subject?'

"'I believe so, my lord.'

"'Ha!' He seemed lost for a moment in thought, and then added, 'I wish I had known this sooner—Ha!'

"What these *Ha's* meant, I was unable to decipher; but I am sure they related to some matter very interesting to him. He explained himself no farther, but immediately turned away from me to the count, and began to talk of the affairs of his court, and of M. de Tourville, of whom he seems to have some knowledge, I suppose through the means of his envoy, Cunningham Falconer.

"I understand that a prodigious party is invited to Falconer Court. The count asked me if I was to be one of them, and seemed to wish it. I like him much. They are to have balls, and plays, and great doings. If I have time, I will write *to-morrow*, and tell you who goes, and give you a sketch of their characters. Mrs Falconer cannot well avoid asking you to some of her entertainments, and it will be pleasant to you to know who's who beforehand."

END OF VOL. I.

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